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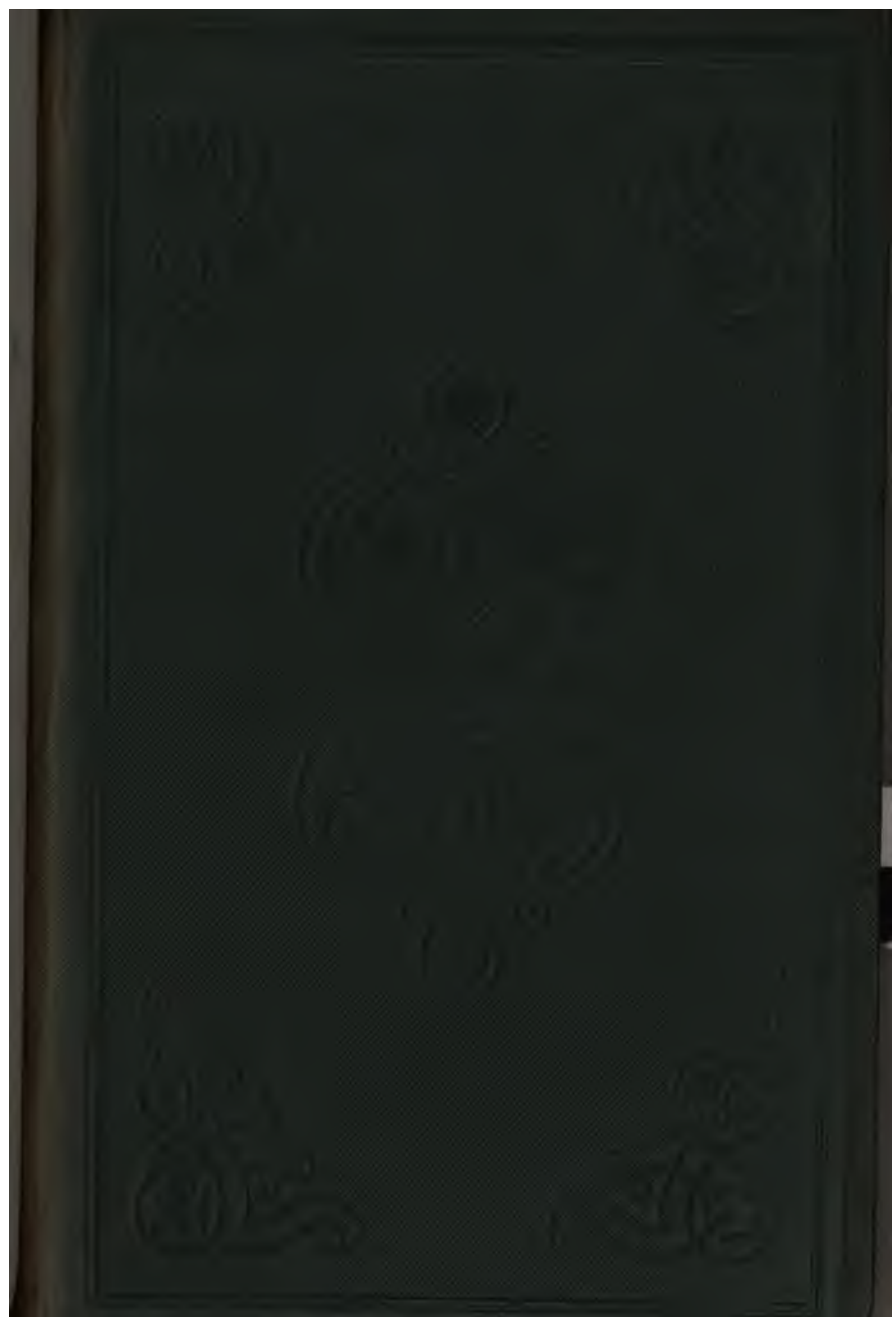
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THE GIPSIES.

DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION,

TO JAMES CRABB, THE GIPSIES' FRIEND.

LONDON:

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THE Author has always taken great interest in the wild people of whom she writes. Much that is in the tale is founded on fact. Should any object to some peculiarities of feeling and opinion, let them remember that they are gipsies, and not roof-people.

THE GIPSIES.

CHAPTER I.

GABRIEL AND ELLA.

At the bottom of a grassy lane, marked by many a turf fire, gipsy Gabriel, gipsy Benjamin, and gipsy Daniel, pitched their tents ; they were all Stanleys, and they were brothers, and each brother had a wife and many children, so that the tribe covered much ground. The gipsies had pitched their tents in a romantic spot ; Gabriel's was under the old oak tree, near the gate that looks over the moor. Gipsy Ben's to the right of the holly trees, close down by the brook, near the mound ; and gipsy Dan's was hid

behind the underwood, on a patch of turf. Gipsies love pretty spots, they love the green trees, and hills, and high fern, and thick underwood, and the small green pathway ; and they rejoice to run bare-legged over the heath, and hills, and far away, with nobody to see them, or to think of them ; and often when the cottage child is dreaming of playing truant, the wild dark gipsy is running without shoes or stockings through the lanes and by-ways, with the moon and stars above him.

On the night of which I am speaking, all was quiet in the lane, for it was far in the night, and it seemed as if not a living thing were stirring ; but it was not so, for at the door of gipsy Gab's tent stood his son, young Gabriel, a boy of fourteen or near it ; he knelt with his hands crossed on his breast, looking up to the moon sailing near a dark cloud. Gabriel knelt on one knee at the tent door ; within the tent lay an infant, the little Michael, fast asleep, and by the side of the sleeper crouched a sharp, short-eared cur, watching Gabriel. He did not speak

for some time, so thoroughly did he enjoy the stillness of the night, with its soft clear air, and the scent of the many night flowers : then he spoke, and with a deep-drawn sigh said, " I cannot think that any man or woman who ever lived can have made the moon and stars and all the other beauties of the night ; they are so grand, so very great. Who then could have made them ? Somebody must. Oh ! I wish, I wish I could know ; my heart springs up in me to answer me, and it cannot." The dog that had crept to his side, sprang away over a gap in the hedge. " It is Ella," said Gabriel, sitting down and taking up a stick that lay beside him. Ella bounded over a gate, just touching it lightly with one hand.

" So, Ella, you are come back. I knew it was you, by the delight Twig showed when he heard your step."

" Yes, here I am ; I have had enough of the fair, and the old tumbled-down ruin."

" You went to the ruin, did you ? I suppose to tell fortunes."

" Yes," said Ella, " my mother went there,

and she took me and Rachel with her, for she said our pretty ways and faces would bring her many a shilling."

"Have you kept your promise, Ella?"

"What promise?"

"The promise you made me, that you would use no bad words."

"No, Gabriel, not I; I had not been in the fair two minutes before a carter's boy in a smock-frock came up with his whip in his hand and said, 'Out of my way, you gipsy you.'"

"And you swore at him, Ella?"

"And did I not? I sent at him all the strongest oaths I could, for he touched me scornfully upon my shoulder with his whip."

"I wish you had not done so," said Gabriel, looking up to the moon.

"Why may I not use bad words, as you often call them? And how do you know that they *are* bad words? they may be good, for all we know; you are the only one in the tents, Gabriel, that does not like them."

"It is so, but look up at the moon, and stars, and think upon the bright sun. Do you think any of our people, or any man or woman that ever lived, made them?"

"No, I do not think they did."

"I have often and often wished, since my grandmother's death, Ella, that I knew who made them, for I am sure whoever made them would not like our goings on, or our swearing, lying, and stealing."

"I have often thought so myself," said Ella, "and do you know, Gabriel, it was the moon that made me return to you to-night, for I did not like the noise in the ruin, and I remembered my words to the carter's boy, and I thought I would come back to talk with you."

Gabriel looked pleased. "Ella," he said, "my grandmother's death-words often come over me, her groans, and her moans, and her words at last, I wish I had never told a lie—I wish I had never stolen—I wish I had never sworn,—I wish I never had."

"Well, Gab dear, our grannie is as quiet,

and thinks and feels as little as a stone now, so don't grieve, Gabriel."

"But I cannot help grieving, for I should like to know where she is."

"Where she is!" repeated Ella; "why dead."

"Ella, do you think she has no more feeling than a stone? I do not think so."

"Why, you foolish boy," said Ella, "if her grave were opened, would she not be found in her coffin?"

"Her body would, I know, be found in the coffin; but something of her is now, I think, living somewhere or other, though we cannot see her, or hear her, or know where she is. Sometimes I think she may be in the moon, and then, Ella, I do so wish to go to the silver country to see her! I loved her very much; she was kind to me, you know, Ella."

"She was kind to all, but she was particularly fond of you, because she said you dreamed away like her son, who faded into his grave when yet a boy."

“‘Like a flower pining away from among us,’ as she used to say,” said Gabriel; “what part of her can be gone to the moon, if all her body, head, arms, legs, and all are in the grave? Laugh not, Ella, but tell me this: When you are asleep, is not your body quiet? yet perhaps you are dreaming that you are running over the hills with me; but your legs stir not, and you cannot run away because you are asleep.”

“I know that,” said Ella.

“Well, the part that thinks, perhaps, may not die.”

“If it were so,” said Ella, “the world would be black with thoughts: think if our thoughts were to leave our bodies in the grave, and come back again.”

“Why, have we ever seen a thought? Why should not our thoughts come back again like the wind or sound, which we feel and hear, but cannot see? besides, Ella, we cannot see our thoughts: even now think of something.”

“I have,” said Ella.

“You cannot see the thought.”

"I can, I can! there it goes flying and swimming on the air like thistle-down! Yet it is not thistle-down that you see, but my thought."

"I have crushed your thought," said Gabriel, catching the down; "but talk gravely, Ella, don't let us joke for a few minutes: have you a thought in the heart?"

"I have," said Ella.

"You cannot see the thought."

"No, I cannot certainly; but come, dear Gab, I am so tired that I can do nothing but yawn."

"You have walked many miles to-day."

"I have: besides, Gabriel, unless some one were to come down from the moon and tell of another earth, we could not find it out."

"It is so," said Gabriel, "yet still let us remember our grandmother's last sad words, and think upon her last sad looks, and let us not swear, lie, or steal."

"I will do all I can," said Ella.

"When do you think they will return?"

"In an hour or so; but Jack, Sam, and

Charley, will not be here till cock-crow, and every bit of moon is gone, for they are dancing with the maidens in the field below the mill."

"Pretty noisy they will be when they return ; so I shall creep into the barn."

"So will I," said Ella ; and the two gipsies crept into a barn and were soon asleep among the soft hay.

CHAPTER II.

RACHEL AND OTHER GIPSIES.

MORNING.

EARLY at peep of day, Ella stood with Gabriel before the tent; the ground was covered with dew, and the sky with brilliant colours; for the sun was coming forth in all his majesty.

“What are you thinking of with your eyes seeking the rising sun?” she said.

“I am thinking, Ella; I am wishing the sun had life, and a voice, and could hear me.”

“And don’t you be wishing any such thing; fancy the voice of the sun, how loud it would be, it would deafen us all. And what would ye tell it?”

"I would tell it nothing, for it would know all; but I would pray to it, and beg it to keep me from what my heart tells me is wrong."

"I am sure, and I am glad then, that it has not life, for it would be so grand and fine in its goodness—so good in all, that it never could be pleased with anything we could do, however we might try to please it."

"I tell you what then, Ella, if it were so, and the sun so hard a task-master, I should like the moon to be a great friend of the sun's; think of the soft looks of the moon."

"That would be very nice, for the moon looks as if it would weep for our sins and sorrows."

"Just when the sun was going to be the most angry with us, the moon should appear close by his side, and say something kind for us to take off the sun's anger, so burning hot against us."

"Then we should not be frightened, for we should know that we had a friend to speak a good word for us to the sun. Who

could deny the sweet lady, the moon, anything?"

"I should like to have the sun a great chief; a thousand times ten thousand more powerful than the king of our people."

"Yes," said Ella, "and loving and doing anything that the kind soft moon would ask for us."

Gabriel's father loved him above all his sons, for he was gentle, and kind, and ready to serve all in the tents.

"Father," said Gabriel, leaving Ella, and going to a weather-beaten gipsy, who was mending a saddle, "what a morning!"

"Yes, my lad of the stars; a morning fit for the king of the gipsies to dance his hornpipe upon."

"Fit, father, for better than that," said Gabriel, smiling.

"Rachel gained many a penny yesterday with her hornpipe," said his father; "she is springy as a bird, you know."

"She is," said Gabriel; "yet the hornpipe is an ugly dance. I wish Rachel would sell baskets as Ella does."

"It is a tumbly dance," said his father;
"but it's the dance for pennies."

"Gab, Gab, where are you?" said Rachel,
from within a cart. "I want you, I want
you! come here, come here!"

"Well, here I am."

Rachel bounded from the cart with some
gingerbread in her hand. "Take this,"
she said.

"What did you give for it?"

"Nothing."

"Who gave it to you?"

"Nobody," said the gipsy girl, laughing,
and showing her white teeth. "Any more
questions, Gab?"

"You stole it then?"

"To be sure; gipsies buy not of roof
people, when they can steal from them."

"I take it not, then, from you," said
Gabriel.

"Nonsense; why not?"

"I never will take anything that is
stolen."

"You stupid fellow! I really don't know
what is come over you since my grand-

mother's death ; you will neither beg, lie, nor steal ; you are no true gipsy ; you will soon be sitting by your cottage-door looking upon the same hedges, the same trees, the same gates, year after year, day after day, week after week."

"No, never!" said Gabriel, shuddering with the very idea ; "am I not a true-born gipsy ? as high-born a gipsy as ever trod English ground ? Look at my brown skin, and the white palms of my hands, and say, am I not from Egypt ? Look at my thin ancle, that you, Rachel, might span, and say, am I not from Egypt ? Look at my springy form, and say, am I not an Egyptian ?"

"Then, Gab, since you are so true a gipsy, and a Stanley, in whose familys is the king of the gipsies, why will you leave our gipsy ways, and behave no better than a roof man, who has not one drop of true blood in his veins?"

"Did the Egyptian in his own land steal, lie, or swear, Rachel?"

"I suppose so ; I think the Stanleys and

Marks did; I question if even in Egypt they did not take everything they could lay their hands on; but here comes my mother, with Jack and Sam, and the donkey, and the old cart-horse. I must away."

And Rachel jumped, singing, on a donkey, and a magpie perched itself behind her, saying, "Mag, Mag, what's o'clock?"

"Come, Gab, think better of the gingerbread, stupid fellow; there, take it."

"No, Rachey, I shall not; my heart tells me not."

"Your heart," said Rachel, "I do think it is not bigger than a bean, you soft fellow. There, take it up, and eat it," and Rachel threw the gingerbread on the ground. Twig, who had no such scruples, snatched it up, and ate it in a moment. "Twig, Twig, if you were not a low-born looking cur, I would call you a true gipsy; but, my dog, though you have snatched up what does not belong to you, in a noble gipsy way quite, yet your ugly self has no gipsy blood in it."

Twig ran round and round the gipsy girl's donkey, barking as loud as he could.

"Stop," said Rachel, "what am I doing? I shall not ride a donkey to the fair, but Sheltie the shaggy."

And she jumped from the donkey, and in an instant was on a beautiful wild-looking Shetland pony, that had been stolen some months before by her brother Charles the fighter.

"Mother, may I stay at home with Gabriel to-day, to finish the baskets for to-morrow's fair?" said Ella.

"Yes," answered Ruth, her mother, who came striding towards her, with Michael at her back, and her knitting in her hand: "stay at home and welcome, for without Gabriel all your spirit and fun is gone, so you are of no use to me; Rachel, with her joy and fun, gains a hundred pennies where you gain but one."

"Come along, mother," said Rachel, "come along, I mean to take Mag with me to-day." The bird seemed to understand

what she said, it flew to the top of a tree screaming and looking at Rachel. "Ah! you rascal," said the jocund Rachel, shaking her fist at the magpie, "so you will not go with me."

"Mag, Mag, what's o'clock?" answered the bird.

Donkeys, horses, carts, and gipsies, moved onward to the fair, and Gabriel watched them winding round the hill.

CHAPTER III.

ELLA AND GABRIEL AGAIN ALONE.

SISTER SPOT.

AGAIN Gabriel and Ella found themselves alone. They sat down on the grass to their basket-work. Mag left the elm, and thought she herself also would be busy; she flew first to a thorn, near where the children were sitting, hopping about in a determined way, with her head first on this side, then on the other, then hop, hop, hop, she came to the withes; for a second or so, she seemed to examine them, and then she commenced battering them with her beak.

"No, Mag, you are no basket-maker," said Ella, "so don't touch the withes."

"Mag, Mag, what's o'clock?" answered the bird.

"Away, away, tiresome bird," said Gabriel, throwing a stone at her, yet so as not to touch her.

Mag again flew to the thorn, screaming and crying out, "Dick, poor Dick!—Mag, what's o'clock?"

"Where are you going, Ella?"

"Into uncle Ben's tent."

"For what?"

"A knife; I know there is a sharp one there."

"Here, take mine."

"No, thank you, I had the knife sharpened yesterday for uncle; and yours, I know, is a little blunt."

"Uncle Ben will look but gloaming upon you for taking his knife."

"No," said Ella, "he won't darken his brow upon me, for he said I might have it to cut my withes, and may be he would give it to me some day altogether."

Gipsies have no settled point of action for a moment together; if they say they

will do this, ten to one but they do something else: so it was with Ella: she fully intended, when she arose, to go into uncle Ben's tent, but looking upon a hill covered with buttercups, she thought the yellow of the flowers in the sun looked very inviting, and away she sprang, and was on the hill on the other side of the stream in a trice. Then holding forth her arms, she sang as a bird.

“ We are free, we are free,
As the winds we are free,
As the bird we are free,
North, south, east, west,
We do rove;
We are free, we are free.”

This rough gipsy song Ella and Gabriel often sang with Rachel, and many a penny had been thrown to the joyous young things.

“ Come back, Ella, for I have two baskets to finish before to-morrow's fair.”

“ I do believe Sister Spot is down there on the other side of that clump of trees, the sly little creature; I saw her trotting off when they were putting the saddle upon

the black donkey, she knew her turn would come next. I'll answer for it she is there," said Gabriel.

"I see her gentle face," said Ella; "do call her, she will not come to me."

Gabriel sprang up from the withes, as an arrow from the bow, and standing upon a gate, looked forth towards the clump.

"There she is, the darling!" said the boy.

"We could scarcely do anything with her yesterday in the fair, because you were not there," said Ella.

"She knows as well as possible when I am amongst you," said Gabriel.

"Yes, and she looks round so wistfully for you."

"Whistle to her, and call her, Ella."

Ella did so; but Sister Spot did not even look up, only she cocked one ear to the direction from whence the sound came.

"Again, Ella, and see if she will not look this way."

"It is all waste time, and you know it is, Gab; but you so like to see the love of the creature."

Gabriel gave one whistle, and the little mare bounded to him. The gipsy threw his arms round the creature's back, and thus spoke to it.

"My deary, my own! I will never part with you, no, never; you shall feed on the sweet grass beside the waters; you shall crop the young trees; and you shall get up and lie down when you please, and you shall never feel the whip nor the spur; for she who loved me gave you to me, and I love you for her sake, and for yours, too, my own little Spot."

The mare rubbed its face against Gabriel, seeming to delight in his caresses, and then trotted off again to the quarry where she had left so much sweet grass. They now returned to the basket-work, and they sang, and worked, and talked together, without stopping, for some hours; then they sang their wild gipsy songs.

CHAPTER IV.

ELLA FORGETS HER GOOD RESOLVES.

THE MIDNIGHT RIDE.

WHILE they were singing like merry birds, a gentleman on horseback passed them. Ella forgot all her good intentions, and jumping up, ran to meet the stranger, and curtseying, said, "Please give me a halfpenny for my poor mother, who is ill."

"Ella, Ella," called out Gabriel in an angry tone, "how can you say so?"

Ella laughed, and said, "I forgot, Gabriel, I forgot that I did not mean ever to tell another lie. Sir, my mother is not ill, that's sure, only gone to the fair."

"And that is the same thing," said the

gentleman ; “ you little story-teller, I’ll not give you a farthing ; but there, my boy, is something for you ; ” and the gentleman threw down a shilling, and rode on. Ella sat down again to her basket-work, and did not speak for some time. Gabriel also was silent.

“ Come, say something, Gabriel dear,” said Ella, “ for I am nigh sick of my own thoughts, and well I may be.”

“ I can’t contradict you there,” said Gabriel.

“ I wish I had not told the lie,” said Ella, “ not for the sake of the shilling, for I don’t care for one, two, or three shillings ; but I would I had not told the lie, for my heart is at me, and angry with me.”

“ Ella, I wish I knew who made this heart, that will not let you alone.”

“ I know who made this basket,” said Ella, “ you did ; and if anything were wrong in the making, I could go to you, and you would put it to rights.”

“ I know my father’s watch,” said Gabriel, “ was made by a watchmaker.”

"And if," put in Ella drolly, "it went wrong, he would not go to the watchmaker, because he stole it from him."

"Ella, don't joke about that," said Gabriel, sadly, "don't."

"How wistful you looked when you said that," said Ella; "the tones were like a mournful bird's."

"I would I knew the great heart-maker," said Gabriel; "I would go to the great man, and bid him put your heart and my heart right, Ella, so that it should never go wrong again."

Late in the evening they had finished their baskets, and tied them in a heap in their tents. Ella went to the stream to fill her kettle, and they sat down to tea.

"Ella, how I do like being alone with you, we are so quiet!"

"We are," said Ella; "and I think how nice it would be if we could find a large tract of country to wander up and down in by ourselves."

"We should soon," said Gabriel, "wish for Rachey, with her lark-mounting joy."

"Indeed we should," said Ella; "but then I am afraid she would not come alone, for she would bid all in the tents follow her, and they would troop after her, for she never bids in vain."

"I wish," said Gabriel, "our king hated lying and stealing, and would make laws against so doing."

"Such laws would never answer to him," said Ella; "for he gets something by every stolen thing, from a horse down to a hop-pole."

"I am glad to think," said Gabriel, "that Sister Spot was not stolen, at least by us."

"How did my grandmother get her then?" asked Ella; "for I thought, to be sure, she was taken from the roof people, as almost every four-legged creature is."

"My grandmother found it by the side of its mother that was dying. Most likely the poor mother had been driven too hard, so that she died of fatigue. Sure enough, the poor creature was just dying on the edge of a common, when my grandmother came up; she did all she could for it, but it died; it

could not keep life in after the hard driving it had had; yet my grandmother says, it looked as if it wished to live, when she spoke to it in a kind voice."

"Poor thing!" said Ella, the tear glistening in her eye.

"My grandmother," continued Gabriel, "took the foal, our dear Spot, home with her, and brought it up, and treated it as one of her own; it fed with her, and lay down by her side, as a child would have done."

"Granny would never let any one get on its back," said Ella, "but you."

"If she could help it," said Gabriel; "but Jack, and Sam, and Charley, have had many a ride on her. Jack was always playing it some trick. I remember one day, when my granny was far away, as we all thought, Jack jumped on its back with a crown of straw upon his head, and saying, 'Bow all of you, good people, to your king!' set off at full speed; he rode, and he rode, till, as he said, he rode into granny's mouth; for he came to a village, and the first person he met was my grandmother. Oh! what a

beating poor Jack got from father, for he was with my grandmother; but it could not cure him, and many and many a moonlight ride has he had on her since."

"Let us have a ride this evening," said Ella; "it is so cool and pleasant, and the day has been so hot."

"I will whistle to her, and give her some hay, and a handful of corn, which she may eat whilst we are at tea, and then we will go," said Gabriel; and he gave a whistle, which brought Sister Spot to his side in an instant.

When the mare had eaten the hay and corn, Gabriel put a halter round her neck, and he and Ella jumped upon her back. Ella kept herself on by clasping round Gabriel's waist. Sister Spot set off at full speed; had she not been sure-footed, she must have come down, for with the halter Gabriel could not guide her well: she galloped through a part of the New Forest, amongst high fern, up a height to a moor. Here she stopped to take breath, for she had scarcely slackened her pace for two miles.

The gipsies looked around them, and their hearts glowed within them as they looked forth upon the landscape, rich with the yellow evening tints. They pointed out to each other the beautiful spots that could be seen from the hills, and all the lights and shadows that were thrown on the earth by the setting sun. Sister Spot had now recovered her breath, so off she set again, and they went so far, so many more miles than they intended, that they thought they had better lie down under a hayrick that was before them, and let Sister Spot loose on the heath. Spot liked this arrangement very well, for she was tired; and when the halter was taken off, she rolled herself over and over again, in the heather.

"How happy she is," said Gabriel; "we need not tie her, for there are hurdles all round the rick, so she cannot get at the hay."

"I will give her some," said Ella.

"No, no, you may not," said Gabriel, "for it is not our hay, and it would be stealing."

"You honest fellow!" said a gamekeeper, who was looking for snares, and whom the children did not see.

Ella started like a guilty thing, and gave a scream. The man laughed, and told her not to be afraid. Gabriel asked if they might sleep under the hay.

"To be sure; you can do no harm; but, stop, help me to pull a little hay to make you a bed."

Sister Spot, who saw all this going on, came whinnying for a little, and the good-natured man threw her some hay.

"What a beautiful mare! how old, do you suppose?"

"Seven, or thereabouts," said Gabriel.

"Thoroughbred; you gipsies help yourselves to choice animals."

"Ay, you think she was stolen," said Ella; "she was not."

"Not at least by our tribe," said Gabriel; "*she* could never have been stolen; her mother might have been, and most likely was."

"What tribe do you belong to?"

"To the Stanleys."

"Do they never steal?"

"Yes," said Ella, "to be sure they do, of the roof people; they were no true gipsies else."

The gamekeeper was amused, and asked Gabriel how he came by such a rare pony. Gabriel told Sister Spot's story.

"Why do you call her Sister Spot?"

"We call her Sister, for she is as fond as a sister; and Spot, because she is coal black all over, but for that one white spot on her forehead."

"She is worth any money; and my master would give a good price for her."

"My own Sister Spot!" said Ella, throwing her arms round the creature's neck; "and do they think you shall be taken from us, and from our tents, to dwell with strangers? No, my darling, where we go, you go; and where we rest, you rest; our tent is your tent, our abiding place your abiding place."

"I would not part with her for anything you could offer me," said the gipsy boy, "for my grandmother's sake."

"You loved your grandmother, then?"

"I loved her! to be sure I did; how could I but love her, she was of our blood?"

"When she died," said Ella, "the flesh left my father's bones for the sadness he felt by day and by night."

"We gipsies," said Gabriel, "love our own; do not you cottagers?"

The gamekeeper laughed at the gipsy's quaint and simple way of talking.

"You laugh," said Gabriel, "at our speech; I suppose it is unlike that of the roof people, yet we mean nothing."

"Would all cottagers meant as well, and were as honest as you," said the man; "then I should not have the whole night to spend in looking for snares, instead of going to bed."

"Who would wish to be in bed in such a night as this?" said the gipsy boy; "with the moon and stars looking down upon us from every part of the sky."

"Yes, Gab," said Ella, "it is very pleasant to run about at one's own will, beneath the moon and stars; but it is another story

to be obliged to walk and watch at night. Then, Gab, I think you had rather lay you down to sleep."

"It is not happiness," said Gabriel, "to be obliged to do anything."

"Well, God bless you! my children, and keep you honest," said the gamekeeper; and he took up his gun, and walked off into a wood.

"God bless you!" repeated Gabriel, slowly. "Ella, did you not mark his words, God bless you? To bless, is to make happy; and God was the one he called upon to make us happy. Who is, who can be God?"

"How often," said Ella, "have I asked my mother who God is; for they are always using the word when they are angry."

"So have I," said Gabriel; "but her answer is, so is father's, 'Nobody that can do you any good.'"

"I am sure," said Ella, "the man does not think that God can do us no good."

"No," said Gabriel, "he is a kind man, I am sure; and he felt heart-kindness towards us, when he said, God bless you! O

Ella! I wish we knew who God is; when shall we? do you think we shall ever?"

"Perhaps God, whoever he may be, will let us," said Ella; "and the very next person who knows about Him, we will not let go till he has told us."

When they arrived in their tents, they found all asleep; they gave Spot some hay, and quietly went off to the barn; for though they had had some sleep in the hay, their night had been so short, that they lay themselves down again for an hour or so. In the morning they collected their baskets, threw them over their shoulders, and set off on foot for the fair, for they would not take Spot with them, as she had had such a long gallop the night before. They sold all their baskets, and when they returned, they put eight shillings into Ruth's hands. "Well done, my children," said their mother; and they could have added, "and honestly come by."

CHAPTER V.

THE GIPSIES SET OFF FOR THEIR WINTER
QUARTERS.

THE SHEPHERD'S BOY.

It was now late in September, the leaves were changing colour, and the atmosphere was foggy and dull; this was a signal for departure into winter quarters. The robin sang his song loud and shrill, and a single song was every now and then heard from other birds. On the first day of October, the head of the tribe, an old man of eighty-four, stood on the mound by his tent door, and with a loud voice proclaimed that all must be ready on the morrow to start for their winter quarters, as they had far to go

before the end of November, and their march would be slow, as they had so many tender children with them. Nothing does the gipsy so love as roaming; they set up a loud cry, and Mag, from the oak, screamed because they screamed. The proclamation pleased them right well, for they had now been four months in this their resting place. Some, however, did not hear it with unmixed feelings. Jack thought with gentleness of the young Alice Brand's blue eyes; Leah, the daughter of Daniel Stanley, wished to see again Simon Willis, the farmer's son, who was gone to a cattle fair with his father's bullocks, and was not expected back for some days. "He will only find the ashes of our fires," said the girl to herself with a sigh. Ella and Gabriel sighed bitterly, for they loved the lane better than any spot in merry England; and they felt so deeply leaving it, that they shunned each other for many hours. Rachel, who was all glee and fun, danced and sang from tent to tent, assisting all in packing. Jack found her worrying the magpie, who hopped down from the trees to fly at her legs.

"Away to your tent, Rachel, and keep quiet; and don't appear to be so glad to leave an old friend."

"And who is my old friend, Jacky?"

"Why, the lane to be sure," said Jack, passing on.

"Ah! and is that the old friend?" said Rachel, looking after him. "Poor fellow! he no ways likes leaving Alice Brand."

Mary, Dan's daughter, a child of nine, seeing Ella and Gabriel look grave and sorry, went to them, and taking each by the hand, said, "Don't look so grave, but let us run off through that field to Dearn's crag on the moor, and have a game for the last time there this year, at 'Follow, follow, catch me.'"

"Wait for me," said Rachel, huddling back all her things into the old box.

"I'll come," said one; "so will I," said another, till about a dozen children ran off together to the moor to play, and the welkin rang with their shouts.

The next morning the Stanleys set off at an early hour. Ella and Gabriel lagged behind with Sister Spot, to talk of the quiet

lane, and the fields round about, and the moor, and to gather the few wild flowers that remained in the hedges. They then hurried on to the rest of the party, and for a quarter of a mile the road was lined with gipsies, carts, horses, donkeys, and mules. Mag was put in a cage on the old black donkey: she was exceedingly cross at being a prisoner, so she sat sulky on the perch, close to the side, watching every gipsy that passed, in hopes of being able to get a bite. Rachel, as she went by on Sheltie, brushed her stick against the bars of the cage; Mag's rage burst forth at this insult from the hated gipsy, and she drove her beak as hard as she could against the bars, hammering in spite, and jumping from the perch to the bottom of the cage, and from the bottom of the cage to the perch. Dogs, large and small, were coupled that they might not stray. The tribe did not rest for more than a day or two at the time, till they reached Salisbury Plain; here they pitched their tents for a month, for the Stanleys were always well received in Salisbury and its neighbourhood.

One morning very early Gabriel took his leaping-pole, and walked over the plain ; it was a cold morning, and the snow lay frozen on the ground. All who have crossed the plain, know how cold it must have been, even for a gipsy. Gabriel shivered for the first five minutes, till, by dint of running and leaping, he made his blood to circulate. He had not gone far before he met a boy, crying as if his heart would break ; the poor fellow was walking towards a hut, one of the miserable huts built for the shepherd in the winter. On the plain the sheep are taught to follow the shepherd, and the shepherd does not drive the sheep before him : it is a pretty sight to see this, and the little boy, when he sees it, may think of this verse, and look for it in the Bible : " And he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out ; and when he putteth forth his own sheep he *goeth before them*, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice."

" What makes you cry so bitterly ?" asked Gabriel ; " is it the cold ? Here, take my pole, and leap over a few yards of snow, and you will soon be warm again."

"It is not the cold that makes me cry," said the boy; "but I have lost a sheep in the snow, and I know not what has become of it; and I am sure I know not what will become of me, if I bring it not home to the fold."

"Come," said Gabriel, "crying will do no good, or bring it back again; our people will find it for you;" and he put both his hands to his mouth, and gave a shrill whistle.

"A cry of distress!" said several gipsies, running from their tents.

"It was the cry of a Gabriel," said Reuben, from Dan's tent; "three whistles, with an interval in the last."

"Is the young Gabriel here?" said Abner.

"No," said Cyril, "he went from us early."

"Which way came it? let us give an answering call;" and Abner gave an answering whistle, louder and shriller than Gabriel's. Gabriel again answered the whistle, and ere long a troop of gipsy lads poured down upon them.

"Come," said Gabriel, "don't let them see thee, lad, in tears ; the gipsy will not assist the wailing boy ; put on a look of spirit, if thou hast it not. Come, my lad, come."

The poor boy, so called upon, tried to put on as joyous a look as the high, careless, spirited Gabriel. Gabriel came forward, and told of the lost sheep, and the gipsies set off in bands over the plain in quest of it. After some time, a party heard a shout and halloo ; they looked in the direction from whence the sounds came, and they beheld, upon a barrow, a gipsy, whom they thought to be Gabriel, yet at a great distance from them, so that they could not be sure. They hurried to the spot, and found Gabriel standing over the lost sheep, and Ella sitting down on the snow, with the head of the poor animal in her lap : she was breathing upon it, and rubbing it with her warm hands ; but her small breath and tiny hands could do little towards bringing back life to the sheep that appeared quite dead. The shepherd boy lay himself down by the animal, and put his mouth to the sheep's.

"It still breathes," he said, "it is not quite dead, but it will be, before I get to the hut."

"Take it," said Edwin, "to the tents: come, Sam, lend a hand."

"What will you do with it there?" asked the boy, afraid of what the gipsies might do with it.

"Why, cut it up and eat it," said a gipsy.

"Cannot you trust us with it, after all the trouble we have had about it?" asked Gabriel.

"Yes, I know you are all kind, as kind can be; but should my master find me in your tents, he would flay me alive."

"Poor fellow! have you none to take your part?" said Rachel; "no father, no mother?"

"I am without father and mother; they are both gone, and I wish I were gone too."

"Why did they leave you?" said Mary; "it was very cruel of them."

"They are both dead, and I wish I could die, but I cannot till God please to take me."

Gabriel started, but he said nothing ; he looked round for Ella : Ella was not there.

" Does your master treat you unkindly ?" asked Alice.

" Worse than a dog."

" Do not return to him, but leave the horrible creature," said Rachel.

" Where am I to go if I do run away ?"

" Come with us," said Rachel ; " come, and be one in the Stanley tents, and we will take every care of you."

" Come," said wild Willy, a gipsy from the tent of Benjamin, and whose long locks and wild blue eyes had gained him this name ; " if we stay here all day, the sheep has no chance of being warmed into life. Come, Gabriel and Edwin, lend a hand and hoist him up, for he will require three to do it."

They stooped over the sheep, and taking it up between themselves, they carried it to the tents. Here they found Ella busily engaged with her cousin, Charlotte Stanley, in warming ale for the sheep.

" How long you have been coming !" said Ella.

"Here, don't throw the poor creature down on the ground," said Rachel, "but place it gently on this thick coat;" and she spread a coat on the ground. The senseless creature was put with all care on the ground. "There," said Rachel, "a poor speechless lord could not be treated more kindly."

Gabriel took up a spoon, and said he would put some hot ale into its mouth.

"No, no, Gabby," said Ella, taking a cup and pouring some ale into it, "*you* open its mouth, and Rachey shall pour the ale in, whilst I hold the cup."

"That will be the best," said Gabriel, sitting down to open the sheep's mouth.

Rachel took the spoon, but she laughed so heartily at the sheep's face with its mouth open, that she was obliged to give Mary the spoon, saying, "Come, Polly, the sheep looks so silly, that I cannot for laughing give it its ale." Mary poured many a spoonful down its throat, and the poor animal soon became better; they then covered it with a warm rug and blankets.

"There, we have done all we can for you,"

said wild Willy, "and we have covered you with a mat made of sheep-skin—a skin, perhaps, belonging to some friend of yours, some poor silly sheep whom you have nibbled with."

"Don't say so," said the little boy, Mic, "for perhaps the poor sheep may die to think on't."

"Well, thank you for your kindness," said the shepherd's boy; "and now I must go, for should my master find me among you, he will kill me almost."

"Go!" said Rachel; "and do you think you shall leave us without your breakfast?"

"I have my breakfast with me," said the boy?"

"Where?" asked the gipsies, quite astonished.

"In this bag;" and he drew out some bread and cheese; "here is my breakfast, dinner, and supper."

"Mercy me!" cried Rachel; "why a new hatched water-fly, flitting on the water, would be up to more than that."

"Yes," said Abner, "ere the trout had seized it."

"I question," said Renel, "if the fly could eat much after that."

"Why, no," said Abner, laughing.

"Now sit down," said the good-natured Renel, "and you shall have a basin of soup."

"You shall," said Rachel, "have a basin brimming over in a minute; it is just ready."

"Thank you, thank you," said the boy, the tears coming into his eyes with the thoughts of the savoury mess he was to have.

Ella and Adah went for the largest basin they could find, and as they were looking about in the tent, they remembered cousin Bengy's large porringer, and ran to the Benjamin tent. Rachel filled it to the very brim with soup.

"How good it smells!" said the poor boy; "I have not smelt anything like it since my poor mother died."

Mary gave him a spoon, and all sat down round him laughing and talking, and rejoicing to see him eat. Whilst they were so employed, they heard footsteps stealing round the tents, steps that they knew were not

gipsy footsteps, and in an instant the boy's cruel master rushed into the tents, with a large club in his hand, and his two savage dogs, Brand and Cæsar, at his heels.

"So I have found you, you rascal, have I?" said the enraged man.

The gipsy children, panic struck, uttered a cry, and were going to run off, when Gabriel, with flashing eye, exclaimed, "What, fellows! to leave the stranger, who is come amongst us, in the hour of need." The boys, ashamed of their cowardly conduct, turned and rallied round Gabriel, who had placed himself before the terrified boy. The boy cried for mercy, and the shepherd swore he would break every bone in his skin.

"Up, man," said Gabriel, "cry not for mercy, of which there is about as much as in a shark's mouth; but take that club and assist us."

"Show fight, lad," said Renel.

"Call the dogs to thee," said Gabriel.

"Call the dogs to thee," cried Teman.

The terror of the poor boy was such, that he understood not a word that the boys said.

Rachel, seeing his horror, sprang to his side, and snatching at the club which the boy held, "See, stranger, how a gipsy girl can fight." This gave courage to the boy, who raised his club.

"Call, call those two dogs to you," said Teman; "we stand but a poor chance if those savage brutes fight with their master."

"Whistle, lad, whistle to the dogs, they know your voice," said Gabriel.

The boy gave a faint, broken whistle, not too faint, however, to reach the dogs, who sprang over the phalanx of boys, and stood by the little fellow, who had always treated them with kindness.

"There," said Rachel, who still stood by the stranger, "keep the mastiffs, and don't let them spring on our people."

The boy did so, and all the cries of Brand, Brand, Cæsar, Cæsar, could not induce them to return to their master. The shepherd dealt furious blows at Gabriel, who headed the band; he was knocked down twice, and the last time so stunned, that he could not rise again; Rachel and Ella, and the rest

of the gipsy girls, seeing the champion fallen, added their blows; and Rachel, snatching up the club that had fallen from the hands of the senseless boy, rushed, with her hair streaming down her back, to the fray. No Spanish woman in the Peninsular war ever behaved with greater devotion than did these gipsy girls.

Fortunately, at this moment, the two young men, Jock and Charley, came to the tents, followed by lurchers and other dogs. The sight of these two athletic youths was sufficient to still the cruel man, thus battling with girls and boys.

"What is all this?" asked Jock.

Rachel pointed to Gabriel, and tried to utter, but could not; she burst into tears, and wailed sadly for her brother.

"Hence! away from hence!" said Charley, turning to the man, "or I'll thresh you hence."

Jock lifted up the stunned Gabriel, "My boy," he said, "with all thy star-gazing, and gentle and lovely ways, thou art full of pluck as a fighting-cock."

The shepherd, swearing very coarsely, walked off. When he was gone, and Gabriel restored to himself, Rachel, who was always the spokeswoman, told the whole tale.

"Where is the sheep?" asked Jock.

"There," said Adah, pointing to a heap of clothes and mats, "there, under that."

"What! under all that?" said Jock, laughing, and he went to the heap, and lifted the things up—the sheep was dead. "Well," said Jock, "if you warmed it into life, you stifled it into death."

"I wish it had lived," said Rachel, "it should have followed me about like a dog."

Gabriel poured some water into a pail and washed his bleeding head, then he bound it round with his blue handkerchief. In the evening, when the gipsies returned to their tents and their blazing fires, there was a long consultation held to determine what was to be done under present circumstances. The patriarch, or head of the tribe, took the shepherd's boy to his tent, and told him, that he from that moment was to consider him as a father, who would cherish him as his first-born.

“What did the man say when he left you?” asked Daniel the elder.

“Heswore vengeance,” said Charley, “and let him come and seek of me.”

“The man will keep his promise, depend upon it,” said Benjamin the elder; “yet he will not come alone, but with authority, to recover the boy. Tremble not, my lad, he shall not have thee.”

“Yes, he’ll try to take the law of us,” answered Gabriel the elder, “but law seldom answers against gipsies.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONSULTATION AND THE FLIGHT.

BROWNE TELLS GABRIEL OF GOD.

THE gipsies now sat down round the chief's tent, to consult as to what had best be done, to protect the stranger from his cruel master.

"He must not remain here," said Benjamin, "for the man swore vengeance, and he will come to seek it."

"What is your name, my poor boy?"

"George Browne."

"Well," said the elder Gabriel, "Browne and my boy, Gabriel, had better set out on the swiftest ponies for the west after midnight."

"Whereabouts lies his hut?" asked the elder Daniel.

"To the right of the high barrow, on the main road," said Browne.

"Then," said Gabriel, "take the line across the country to where the setting sun is lighting up that ridge of low hills."

"I know," answered the young Gabriel; "across the plain to the east of the pit-fall."

"Just so," answered his father; "and if any one speak to you, answer not, but continue on your way, and make for the neighbourhood of Lyme; I think you will there fall in with a friendly tribe, who will give you rest among them. Does the chief approve?"

"I do," answered the chief.

"What tribe?" asked Rachel, running to her father; "what tribe, my father?"

"The tribe of Backs."

"Then I will go," said Rachel, bending low down to Teman; "for I shall see Jolly John the smuggler. I want to know how much he sold his rat for."

"His rat!" said Teman; "who will buy his rat?"

"He will not sell it as a rat," said Rachel, sitting down and smoothing her checked apron with her hands, and looking as if she had an uncommonly good story to tell if they would only ask for it. "You know Jolly John," she continued, finding they did not intend asking for the story.

"Know him! to be sure; who does not?" said Elam, from the tent of Dan. "Is he not merry as sunshine gnats?"

"Very noisy," said Gabriel, smiling, for he knew how much Rachel loved Jolly John, and how blind she was to any of her friends' faults.

"Stupid, good creature!" said Rachel; "if a person be not looking at the stars and moon all night, and groaning and sighing like an owl, you think him noisy."

"Well, never mind," said Gabriel, laughing, "I do like him."

"I know you do, dear Gabby," said Rachel, jumping up and kissing him, "and I do not think you in the least stupid."

"What a foolish girl you are," said David Dan; "do sit down and tell your story, and not keep us here all day."

"Ah, Davy! and are you a wanting the story, boy? I thought you were, and you were looking so curious."

"Don't let it be very long," said Renel.

"Mine never are but when I have a long one to tell."

"Let this be your shortest," said David.

"Well, sit down on that thistle, Davy, if you like it, and hear my story."

"None of your stories, Rachel," said the chief, "but let us think of the stranger's safety."

"Another time, another time," said Rachel, nodding to her knot of listening friends, "the great man wills it, so another time."

"We can wait for it," said David.

"It shall be some time before you have it," answered Rachel, looking over her shoulder at him. "Ella," she whispered, "I'll go with Gab, and Browne with you."

"I should like it," said Ella; "but how can we possibly do so?"

"I will go," said Rachel, "and coax Jack out of his Sheltie; you know he never rides it himself, it is too small; and whenever he has lent it to me, I have always taken care of it."

"He will take care of himself," said Ella; "but I don't think Jock will lend it to you for so many weeks."

"I can but ask him," said Rachel, "and you ask for the mule."

"Not I," said Ella, "it is the hardest trotter and canterer I ever rode; it tires me to death."

"I'll go and coax him now," said Rachel; "I can get anything from him by going the right way about it. Jocky dear," she said, going up to her brother, "Jocky dear."

"Well, what do you want with Jocky? something, I am sure, since it is Jocky dear."

"Why, nothing very particular," answered Rachel; "but—"

"Well."

"Why, your pony."

"Nothing very particular, indeed! but I think it is something very particular."

"*Particular* small," said Rachel, laughing.

"Rather small," said Jock, drily.

"Jocky," again began Rachel.

"Well?"

"Will you lend me your Sheltie to ride away with Browne and Gabriel?"

"They are much better without such a wild bird," said Jock.

"I don't ask you that," said Rachel, merrily, "I ask you for Sheltie."

"Stay quietly where you are, and take care of Mic," said her mother.

"Take care of Mic!" answered Rachel, with her gipsy whine; "and wherefore that, dear mother? don't you know I hate watching children? Jocky, I must have Sheltie, for what will Gabriel and the stranger do without me? you know they must have their dinners cooked. Then what will they do for money, the poor things, without me to beg for them by the way."

"That won't do, Rachee; you know they have plenty of money," said Adah.

"Jocky—"

"Well?"

"Well, well! how I do hate your wells, Jocky!"

"Do you?" said her brother, folding his arms, and smiling upon his very beautiful sister, who had thrown herself upon her knees before him, and put her arms a-kimbo.

"If you will lend me your Sheltie, I will promise to give you, when I again see you, threepence out of every sixpence that I get."

"How many sixpennies do you reckon upon?" said her brother.

"Why, five at least a day."

"I dare say," they all said, laughing.

"Just think upon me," said Rachel, "on Sheltie, sitting in the midst of my prettiest ways. All who see me will say, 'A pretty gipsy, good sooth.' Now I will ride up to every one I meet, or come up with."

"I have no doubt you will," said Latty Ben.

"I will," said Rachel, "be sure; and do you think any one will turn from the gipsy girl upon Sheltie, with her sparkling eyes and wild songs?"

"A bargain," said Jock, "if you will promise, on your honour, to give me three-pence out of every sixpence you get."

"I will; yet you make a hard bargain with your little Rachee."

"Nay," said Jock, "*you* made the bargain."

Rachel sat down, and covering her face with her hands for a second, she said, as she looked in Jock's face, "Jocky, I have had a dream, a generous dream, in which was no bargain."

"What was the dream?" said Jock.

"That you had, in the handsomest way possible, given me Sheltie out and out."

"I'll e'en let you have it," said Jock, "for the pail of your love on me."

"Now there's a dear Jock! now there's a nice Jock! now there is a Jocky of Jocks!" sang the happy gipsy. "Ella, Sheltie is my very own."

"Should you like to go?" said Charley the fighter.

"I should," said Ella, "but I have nothing but the mule to ride, and it is a weariful hard goer."

"I will lend you wilful Jennie, the black mare," said Charley; "yet, Ella, why do you look so like a garden-fondled flower? We are all too rough for you."

"I am very well, Charley," said Ella, slowly turning upon him her deep grey eyes.

"You are too good for us," said Rachel, throwing her arms round her young sister, "and so is Gabriel; and if I can get you both to the moon that looks so pale yonder, I will;" and she pointed to the crescent moon just showing herself to the setting sun.

"You would send them to a genty gilpey* in fleecy snaw," said Mary.

"She's a genty gilpey now; but she'll be a fine commanding dame before you get to her," said Rachel.

"She looks coy," said Clary Ben, "for she stands in awe of the sun, who is not gone to his tent."

"I think," said Tulla Ben, "she thought he was quite gone, and so she came out to laugh with a little maiden of a star before

* Genty gilpey is Scotch for elegant girl.

it was her time to play the queen to the earth."

"They say," said Rachel, "the great like often to throw off their greatness, and act the gipsy, thoughtless, wild, and free."

"What nonsense you girls are talking!" said Dic the savage, so called by all for his surly temper.

"You crooning callan,"* said Rachel, "why throw your canker on our buds of talk?"

Rachel said this with such energy that all laughed. Dic rose at this rebuke, and grumbling out that as they were in England they had better talk English, walked away.

"We will," said Rachel, "talk all the languages of the country we pass through, for all him, with his joy-withering heart."

Rachel now thought it was the time to tell her rat story; and as she did not like to tell it unasked, she contrived in a few minutes to introduce the word mouse; for she thought mouse might very naturally lead to rat, and rat to the story, and so it did; for

* Crooning, humming; callan, boy.

no sooner had the word mouse been pronounced, than David said, "Now for your story, Rachel, for I know you long to tell it."

"Story! what story?" said Rachel, pretending to have forgotten all about it.

"Come, come, you remember well enough," said David, "Jolly John and the rat."

"O yes! I remember."

"So you did well enough, at first," said David.

"We have no time for stories now," said Rachel, wishing to conceal from David her desire to tell it, "for we have so much to do before midnight. To call our ponies—to feed them—to get all our food together—to take your pie, Dic."

"My pie!" said Dic, who had just sauntered back to the party.

"Your hare-pie."

"My hare-pie, indeed! I'll knock you on the head if you touch it."

"I'll have it, Davy, though Dic watch over it as a mother over a cradle."

"Hush!" said David, who saw Dic's eye

turned towards them, "Dic looks dangerous; don't talk about him, his temper is not to be trifled with."

"Come, Rachel," said Renel, "don't fidget about, but tell the story."

"You remember Jolly John's pet rat?"

"And it were but bad memory to forget," said Lotan Stanley, "for the beast bit my finger through last year."

"Well, one day—"

"You never would be able to tell a story without a well, Rachel," said Renel.

"Perhaps not, Renel, but don't stop me again."

"Go on, go on," said David.

"I went up one day to Jolly John, who was sitting quietly upon the trunk of an old tree, very busily employed with something in his hand. 'Neither whistling, singing, nor playing tricks,' said I to him, 'then something must be going on.' 'Come here,' said John, bursting with laughter, 'come here, and see my rat turned into a dog.' I went to him, and there it was, sure enough, turned into a beautiful dog, for he had covered it

with a puppy-skin ;* though I knew it was a rat, and I hate rats, yet I could not help rubbing it with my cheek, it looked so beautiful. ‘What are you going to do with it?’ I asked. ‘Sell it at yonder house, where they give so much for dogs. I bet I sell it to her for ten bright guineas.’”

The gipsies were amused, and Gabriel’s love of fun made him laugh, though he wished John had not been so mischievous.

“Did he get the ten guineas?” asked Lotan.

“That’s what I want to know ; and I hope I shall soon meet with him to tell me, and I will tell you all.”

“That you will, I’ll answer for it,” said David.

At midnight, Gabriel and Browne, with Ella and Rachel, sat off for the west ; they rode for many miles without stopping. Browne, who had scarcely ever ridden before, felt dreadfully tired ; so wearied indeed, that he thought several times he must fall from the pony. At about two they arrived

* A true story.

at a ferny spot, and they determined to stop here for the night. Rachel took out a pie, and they very soon ate almost the whole of it; then they lighted a fire for the air was cold and damp, and they boiled the kettle and made tea. They then prepared to lie down, and gathering the fern they laid it in a heap, and Browne and Gabriel tied up the ponies to the gate, lest they should do any mischief to the neighbours. Rachel told them to let the poor creatures have their liberty, for if they did stray, why it was better than that they should be miserable all night. Gabriel did not approve of this loose code of honesty, and he told her to leave the ponies where they were, for their halters were long enough to allow them to lie down, and he had given them enough hay to satisfy them.

"As you will," said Rachel, "but I shall go into that field, and lie down near the hedge, under the shelter of that corn-rick."

"So will I," said Ella.

"Good-night, and kind fairies dance round you," said Gabriel; and he and

Browne walked off to find a night's lodging. Browne bidding Gabriel good-night, left him, and went forward a few steps, then he knelt down, and clasping his hands, he whispered this prayer; "Thank you, my God, for having taken me away from my cruel master; do look upon my kind gipsy friends, and bless them, and bless me also, my God and Saviour."

Gabriel, who saw him kneel and heard him whisper, went to him, and when Browne had finished his prayer, and had bowed his head to the name of his Saviour whom he loved, Gabriel said, "What have you been doing, Browne?"

"Only what you have, I dare say—praying."

"Praying—praying," answered Gabriel, "what is to pray?"

"To beg, and to thank God," said Browne.

"Who is God?" asked Gabriel.

"Our Father who is in heaven, and his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who is at his right hand praying for us, and asking of the great God."

Gabriel started like a mad thing, and bounding over the hedge into the field, where Ella and Rachel lay asleep, he knelt down beside his sister, and taking her hand, said, "Ella, I have found our friends of the sun and moon." He tried in vain to make the sleeping girl sensible, she only answered in her sleep: he looked at both of his sisters, and said, "God, if you are of great power and greatness, and if you know my grandmother, and know where she is, and if you can give good things, give something to my sisters sleeping here." He then left his sisters, and returned to Browne, whom he found also asleep. Gabriel lay down beside him, and after some time he dropped off.

CHAPTER VIII.

GABRIEL SEES A BIBLE FOR THE FIRST TIME.
BROWNE PROMISES TO TEACH HIM TO READ.

RACHEL AND ELLA JOIN THEM.

WHEN Gabriel awoke he found Browne already up. "The earliest cock," he said, "has not taken his head from under his wing. Where is the stranger?" Gabriel plunged into a stream near by, and having dressed himself, went in search of Browne; he saw him not far off, sitting on a sunny bank reading. Browne shut his book, and rose to meet Gabriel.

"What a nice fat little book," said Gabriel, taking it out of his hand; "what is it?"

"The Bible," said Browne.

"Is it filled with stories?" asked Gabriel.

"Yes," said Browne, "of those who loved God, and of those who would not love Him, poor unhappy creatures!"

"Browne," said Gabriel, with a flushed cheek and anxious eye, "how I should like to know God, and to read about Him! Why did not my father let me learn to read?"

"Why should not you learn now? it is not too late."

"Don't you think it is?"

"I am sure it is not," said Browne; "I will teach you, and till you can read, I will read to you."

"Thank you more than once by many," said the gipsy; "and now let us speak again of God."

"Let us," said Browne.

"I wish," said Gabriel, "God would come down to us—come as a kind old man, and stand by us, and tell us what to do, and smile upon us as our chief does when he is well pleased with us."

"He did come down once."

"Did He?" said Gabriel; "not since I could climb the hills, for I must have heard of it; it was such a great thing to have happened."

"No," said Browne; "it is more than eighteen hundred years since God sent his Son Jesus Christ to live among us."

"To live among us!" said Gabriel; "the great God's Son would hardly come to live with the poor of the land, and with those who dwell in tents!"

"You think, perhaps, that Jesus Christ came down to live with the great, and rich, and powerful?"

"Yes," said Gabriel, "to live in palaces, and to teach the kings of this land, and other lands, their duty; then the kings would let their great men hear what the man of heaven had to say, and the great men would teach smaller men, and the smaller still smaller, till at last all would hear God's commands."

"Jesus Christ," said Browne, "came down and lived with the very poorest in the land,

and He was poorer than the poorest, for 'He had not where to lay his head;' and He was so kind and gentle, that the most wretched could speak to Him with the same pleasure they could to a kind brother, a thing we fear the least in the world."

"Then God is the great person in the sun—and Jesus Christ his friend in the moon; then—then Ella will not be afraid of having a God over her."

"What do you mean?" said Browne.

"Ella and I," said Gabriel, "often, when we are by ourselves, talk of good and bad, and Ella once said, that she wished if we had any one above us who could see and know all, and who was very good, and better than any of us can be—if there were such a great and good person, there might be also another as great but softer, and who would be a friend to this great person."

"Who is," said Browne, "Jesus Christ."

"Yes," said Gabriel, "and who is like the friend that lives in the moon, a great person, but of gentler feelings than the one in the sun."

"Jesus Christ," said Browne, "is our Lord, and is full of mercy and kindness for us, and is always asking God to forgive us. O he is such a very, very kind friend!"

"There is a something, it seems almost like a voice in me," said Gabriel, "that is always telling me that this and t'other is wrong; have you ever that voice?"

"Yes," said Browne, "and the voice is placed in us by God to keep us right."

"Sometimes I will not listen to it," said Gabriel, "and then I find that it speaks very quietly and low, but still it always speaks to me."

"That voice," said Browne, "is called conscience, and is placed in us as a sign-post to tell us which way to go in God's commands."

"This voice," said Gabriel, "is always telling me not to swear; is it wrong so to do?"

"Yes," said Browne, "it is very wrong, and the Bible tells me it is; and as the Bible was written under God's commands, we may think that what it tells us must be true."

"Do find," said Gabriel, (touching the Bible,) "where it is said."

"I will look in the Psalms," said Browne, opening the Bible, "I dare say I shall find it there; yes, here, I have found these words: 'Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.'"

"What nice words," said Gabriel, "'that speaketh the'—how does it go on?"

"'That speaketh the truth in his heart.'"

"Then I must not even think a lie," said Gabriel.

"No," said Browne, "you may not."

"But I cannot help thought," said Gabriel.

"Choke it with a good thought," said Browne.

"Not so easily done; how am I to do it?"

"By turning your thought to God," said Browne, "and thinking upon something good that He has done, you will not be able to think of God and a lie at the same time."

"No," said Gabriel, "the devil and a lie do well together—but God and a lie, I suppose do not."

"The devil," said Browne, "is the father of lies."

"Is that told us in the Bible?" said Gabriel.

"It is," said Browne.

"Will I," said Gabriel, "love the child of such a father? No. Find out another passage, there's a good fellow."

"I will," said Browne; "I only wish I knew where the passages were to be found; here is another in Proverbs. 'The lip of truth shall be established for ever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.'"

Rachel and Ella now joined them, and Rachel said,

"What are you two doing, for you look both very grave?"

"Reading," said Gabriel.

"Me, how clever! Gab, you don't pretend to read, do you, for I am sure you cannot?"

"No," said Gabriel, laughing.

"He never pretends anything," said Ella.

"No, *nor neither* he does," said Rachel; he never pretends anything, sweet Traveller's Joy."

"Traveller's Joy! who is sweet Traveller's Joy?" asked Browne.

"Ella," said Rachel, "we call Sweet Traveller's Joy."

"Yes," said Gabriel, "as the traveller's joy winds herself around the dying greens of autumn, so Ella winds herself around each heart, gladdening it, and cheering it."

Ella smiled, and could not but rejoice in such praise from a brother.

"Have you a name?"

"Yes," said Gabriel, "they call me Eagle Eye."

"Because," said Rachel, "his looks and thoughts are so lofty; his dark eye reaches the clouds and topmost peaks, and his thoughts go into the land beyond the clouds."

"What is your name?"

"I am called Rose of the Wilds," said Rachel, "and I like the name marvellously well, "for it speaks of prettiness."

"And you are beautiful," said Ella.

"Of gaiety," said Rachel.

"You are gay," said Ella.

"Thank you, Elly dear," said the wild-spirited Rachel. "Gab, don't look so very rueful, for you are as good as good can be, and a kind fellow as ever lived, and as thorough a gipsy as ever looked towards the sun, and that is better than all the rest besides."

"No," said Browne, "not so, Rachel, it is better to be good than even a gipsy, for if we be not good, God, who is so good and perfect, cannot love us."

"You prosy fellow," thought Rachel, looking at him, "you don't know what it is to have high gipsy blood in your veins. Come to breakfast," she said aloud, "for I have prepared tea for you—some of Dic's gunpowder-tea, which I took instead of his pie, for I believe he sat upon his pie till we galloped off. I wish I could have got at it; rare and good it is, I'll be bound."

"Rachel, you are too bad," said Gabriel; "but come to breakfast."

CHAPTER IX.

BREAKFAST—A TRIBE OF GIPSIES SEEN IN
THE DISTANCE—RACHEL GOES TO THEM.

WHILE they were at breakfast, Rachel descried a tribe of gipsies far in the horizon. "There, then," she said, "I am sure far off, where the earth joins the sky, is a tribe moving."

"Where?" said her companions.

"There, as far off as your eye can reach to the westward of that purple coloured hill."

"I cannot see anything," said they all.

"Well, now, Gabriel, you just look," said Rachel, "and I will point. Follow my finger. You see that clump of firs there in the east about five miles off—there."

"I see," said Gabriel, "to the right of *Dic of the bank—not a hundred yards from Cicilly water."

"Just so," said Rachel.

"The country," thought Browne, "seems to be all their own: they know every stone and hill within many miles."

"A little to the east of that clump, do you not see something moving?" said Rachel.

"I see something certainly moving," said Gabriel, "but from the great distance, it may be anything—sheep, or anything."

"Sheep, indeed," said Rachel; "say a flock of geese; why, Gab, you do not observe the different lengths of the figures, or you would not say so. I fancy I can even spy Stenie Morse's lofty figure."

"When your fancy is up, Rachel, I know not what you may fancy; sit down again, and let us finish our breakfast."

"I will speak with them," said Rachel, "for they may have Jolly John with them, and I must hear the end of the rat story."

* The name of a bank.

"Oh, pray don't bring Jolly John upon us with his noisy laugh and his care-nought look," said Ella.

"Go to them!" said Gabriel; "why, Rachel, they are at least eight miles off."

"Nevertheless, I shall away after them as soon as ever I have finished this cup. How uncommonly good his gunpowder-tea is," she said, chuckling; "what a rage he will be in when he finds it gone!"

"I wonder," said Ella, "if he ever gave away anything in his life."

"Die?" said Gabriel; "never."

"I shall never be too good to take from him," said Rachel. "Gab, will you lend me Sister Spot?"

"Yes," said Gabriel, "but be careful with her."

"I won't hurt her," said Rachel; "please whistle to her."

"She is tied, you know, to the gate," said her brother.

"No, she is not, for I and Ella untied her and the rest very early this morning; there they are all in that underwood, eating the grass near the stream."

Gabriel whistled, and Spot, followed by the other ponies, trotted to them. Rachel took a halter and put it round Spot; the spoilt animal hated Rachel, who had so often teased her with Jock and Charley, and no sooner was she on its back, than she started upright on end, spun round, and threw the gipsy off.

"Nasty beast, that it is," said Rachel; "Gab, you spoil her, and make her good for nothing."

The next instant her anger was gone, and she could not help laughing, for she saw the little mare trotting off again with her companions to the grass, and tossing her head to and fro highly pleased with herself.

"There, you think you have done that cleverly, you cunning beastie," said Rachel; "but Sheltie must come with me; he shall not escape so easily."

"Sit still, and I will catch him for you," said Browne; and he and Gabriel walked off to the stream, and many a minute elapsed ere they could catch the pony; at

last Sheltie was caught, and Gabriel, jumping on the wild little animal, caught it by the mane, and galloped back to Rachel.

The gipsy girl put a halter round its neck, trotted down the hill, and was soon out of sight.

"She will never come up with them," said Browne.

"Will she not?" said Ella. "You little know Rachel; were they twenty miles off she would reach them."

"What a merry-making heart she has," said Browne.

"She is the life of the tents," answered Gabriel.

Gabriel had been busy for the last year in making, with the assistance of others, a long fishing-net; time was his own just then, so he asked Browne to give him a reading lesson. Browne and Ella, with Gabriel, were thus employed for more than an hour, and they felt so much interested in what they were about, that the hour seemed but five minutes.

"We shall soon be able to read," said

Ella, delighted with what she had already done.

"Very soon," said Gabriel; "but sit down, Ella, and I and you will go on with the net, and Browne will read to us; will you not, Browne?"

"I shall like it," said Browne; "shall I read a few prayers from the Prayer-book?"

"Do," said Gabriel.

"I suppose," said Ella, "numbers and numbers of prayers go up together every morning to heaven from different hearts?"

"Yes, many and many, I'll answer for it," said Gabriel.

"I wonder," said Ella, "for my part, people are not praying all day and all night long, when once they find that they can go to heaven, and that God can hear them in heaven."

"Think," said Gabriel, "of having *One* whom you can never tire with asking."

"Rachel would be glad to meet such a one on the road," said Ella. "I did not think there could be found one so kind."

"No, neither did I," said the gipsy boy.

"How quickly a lady's prayers, with her beautiful way of saying them, and placing the fine words, must go to heaven!" said Ella.

"No," said Browne, "God does not care for words, He only cares for the heart; let the prayer come warm from the heart, and God takes it to himself directly."

"There was something about dew in one of the prayers that you read to me yesterday," said Gabriel, "and it did sound so pretty."

"Dew," said Browne, "what could that be? let me think. Oh! I know; 'pour upon us the continual dew of thy blessing.'"

"What was it?" said Gabriel.

"It is very, very pretty," said Ella. "I remember looking very early one morning on a rose, the dew-drops were upon it, and it looked quite glad; and as I looked at it I thought it looked as if it could speak, only it would not, but be silent with gladness for the dew that was upon it."

"So you thought," said Gabriel, "that the rose could speak but would not, for fear of stopping its happiness."

"Yes," said the gipsy girl; "and the dew of God's love on the heart must make the heart very happy, and the tongue very silent to help thought on its way."

"A prayer," said Browne, "is mentioned in the Bible, as one that God loved—the prayer of a poor man who felt he was wicked, and must have God's mercy to go on at all."

"Tell me the prayer that God could think good enough for Him to listen to," said Ella; "what a fine grand prayer it must be!"

"It was a prayer," said Browne, "with very few words in it—'God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

"Few words, indeed," said Ella; "why these few words could have come from a heart not very full of knowledge, and been spoken in less than a minute."

"They came," said Browne, "from a heart given to God, and God knew it."

"Then if this prayer," said Ella, "went up to God, I will not be afraid, and I will pray;" and she knelt down, and bowing

her head, she said quietly, so as hardly to be heard by her companions, " I am sinner ; kind God, love me."

They were going on talking, and Gabriel and Ella feeling quite a new kind of happiness, given by their heart speaking up to their God for them (which is, my little readers, holding communion with God) when they heard the voices of Rachel and others ; Rachel was ascending the hill on the other side, and was speaking to those who remained below.

" Good-bye, good-bye," she called out ; " thank you a thousand times ; and since you cannot come further, farewell, good-bye !"

" There she is," said Ella, " saying adieu with all the warmth of her warm heart."

" See," said Gabriel, " if Rachel do not say she has found somebody whom she likes better than anybody she ever met with in the world before."

" Yes, somebody," said Ella, " who has been the kindest creature that ever was."

" Just see," said Gabriel.

They all nodded, and laughed.

Rachel now appeared above the ridge of the hill; she then turned round, and began kissing her hand with redoubled fervour, and "farewell, farewell, good-bye, good-bye!" were screamed out. These friendly words were answered from below by shouts of "Adieu, adieu!" Wild whistles, shouts, and singing, were heard from the retreating gipsies, and Rachel gazed intently upon the departing figures; when her friends were quite out of sight, Rachel turned to Ella and Gabriel, who sat smiling at her.

"Now and what are you laughing at, Gab and Elly? some funny thought? and it is *I* am the thought, I am thinking. Well, they *are* kind. What does amuse you so? Browne, tell me."

"How am I to tell?" answered the boy.

"Look at Sheltie—look at Sheltie! was there ever anything half so kind? What are you laughing at? And as for Johnny and Susan Morse, I never did like any people half so well before."

"Not jolly John, Rachee?" asked Ella.

"No; at least not better. I do not think I like him better. But what can make you laugh so."

"Don't be vexed," said Gabriel, "but we cannot help laughing; for we agreed you would come back, saying, you never saw anything so delightful as your new friends."

"New friends, indeed!" said Rachel, "they are not new: we met them in Dumfries, on our return from the Highlands last year, foolish things that you are."

"Ah! to be sure," said Gabriel, "near Drumlanrig Castle; one of them had a young eagle."

"John himself had it," said Rachel; "he has it now, an uncomfortable, shabby-feathered bird. I wonder why they call it king of the birds?"

"Its ways I suppose," said Gabriel, "give it that name: it has a kingly flight over its mountains—it has a fine eye, and much that is great in its look."

"Well, I am sure the eagle I saw just now has none of that."

"It was a tame eagle," said Gabriel.

"As for John and Susan, I feel as if they were my brother and sister."

"How many brothers and sisters have you in every tent? for you never return to us without finding a new brother and sister," said Gabriel.

"I don't care how many I have, for they are the nicest things to have in the world; but just look, Gab; see how Sheltie is laden with good things: we may call to every passer by to come in and dine with us for the next month. Just look, two bottles of cider, a goose pie, two large cheeses, and three loaves."

"That is kind," said Ella; "but what did you give for all?"

"Give for all!" said Rachel, "there would have been little kindness if I had given anything."

"Did you give nothing, then?"

"Nothing, they would take nothing; and when I told Johnny Morse to ask of the tent of Gabriel, when they fell in with our people for a return, Johnny made answer,

‘When we fall in with the tribe of Stanley, we shall only think and talk of the wild rose that has left their tent.’ Johnny has the real good way of saying things: he is the nicest creature.”

“I begin to think so myself,” said Ella, “for I am so fond of cheese.”

“Cheese or no cheese, he is so,” said Rachel.

“Did you ever return to us without having found a nicest creature that ever was seen?” said Gabriel.

“Well, perhaps, and I never did,” said Rachel, merrily.

“It will be nothing but nice Johnny Morse all day,” said Ella, quietly.

“No, it will not,” said Rachel, “only once more will I say so. Johnny, thou art the nicest creature, the nicest that nice can be. There, I won’t say the word again—he it was that lugged out all the good things from the chest of stores.”

“I hope,” said Ella, “they will fall in with our tents, for I should like our folk to hear of us; they will be pondering upon us.”

"In all likelihood they will in about ten days," said Rachel, "if not before. I sent many loves and heart-wishes to them, and reverence to the chief; for you know great men like to be great men'd."

"All like respect," said Gabriel.

"Pray don't be so good, please don't," said Rachel.

"I will," said Gabriel, laughing.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE YOUNG GIPSIES GO ON THEIR WAY—
THEY FALL IN WITH THE BACKS.

RACHEL'S SORROWFUL REFLECTIONS.

ELLA having recovered from her fatigue, Rachel declared that she would not cook another dinner for them in that spot.

"What a goad you are, Rachel," said Browne.

"Yes," said Rachel, "I have none of the roof-squat in me; and, do you know, I think you like the gipsy roaming a tiny wee bit."

"I have never been so happy as I have been since I came among you."

"I am glad of it," said Rachel, "I am glad of it, with all my heart; but," she

added to herself, "I am not so sure that I like the Bible; what it says to me cleaves to me, and I cannot but think of it."

Rachel, whose beauty and wild lively manners and simplicity won upon all, gained many a penny by plucking feathers, helping to milk, and driving pigs home for the farmer's wives in the neighbourhood. Many a supper was she invited to, and many a gipsy and ghost-story she told to the lads and lasses round the supper-table. The ghost-story she told the best was the hideous appearance of a huge cowtail, that frightened some gipsy girls into tanterum-tam-nations. The girls were milking in the dead of night a farmer's crooked-horned cow, when they were frightened by a red tail, higher than any of the oaks in the field, coming towards them: the tail was curled at the end, like an uncut terrier's tail; 'and,' said Rachel, 'nothing curls so well as a terrier's tail.' This dreadful tail came hopping towards them in the most frightfully quick way; and though the poor girls jumped up, and overthrew pail and creepy and all, yet they

only just tumbled over the stile in time to get out of the reach of its dreadful lashes. As they were lying under the stile sick with their fall and their terror, they heard the most horrible bellowing, louder and fiercer than any cow could bellow on earth; and the girls said they were sure from that, that the tail belonged to a red cow that had been killed a year or more, and which they had often milked. Then she would tell how her fathers came from far-off lands, and how they were the truest of the true blood, of truer blood than any lord or lady in the land; then she would sing and speak her gipsy language, and dance her wild gipsy dances, and all loved to have her at the supper-board; and there was not a lad far or near who was not ready to take up the cause of the gipsy.

On a bright Monday morning, they packed up their goods, dividing them between the ponies, and they set off on their journey. They never went more than fifteen miles a day, and often not more than ten, as they walked more than they rode. On the third

day, near Gallows Hill, they came up with the Backs.

"A sorry place of meeting this," said Rachel to her sister; "Gallows Hill before us, and Dismal Swamp to the right of hand."

Jolly John was out on a smuggling expedition, and as he had been gone many weeks, they expected him in the tents every hour.

"I could cry, Jessy," said Rachel, "to think that I shall not see your brother."

"Oh! he'll have a dream to-night, saying you are with us," said Jessy; "and that will bring him back again, for he is very fond of the little maiden, Rachel, as he calls you."

"I like to think that he cares for me, for I am sure I do for him, and I do hope he will come."

Jolly John had no dream of Rachel; but he did happen to return next day, full of glee and roar; and Ella said his voice was louder than ever, and Rachel was quite angry, and told her to hold her tongue.

"I mean to do so," said Ella; "for if I

talk ever so much, and ever so loud, I shall not be heard with John in the tents."

At this moment John was relating some smuggling story, and he happened to give one of his loudest laughs.

"He roars like a dozen bulls," said Ella.

"Well, I like a merry, rejoicing laugh," said Rachel; and away she ran to hear what it was all about.

"Do, Johnny," she said, after he had finished the story, "do tell me whether you sold your rat."

"Yes," said John, "for ten guineas."

"Ten guineas!" said Rachel; "too bad, such a cheat."

"Rather so, I confess," said John.

Rachel knew not why, but she felt sorry, after all, that John should have done such a thing; she tried to get rid of the feeling, and to think that her friend John had done nothing *very wrong*; but she could not.

"I won't listen to the Bible any more," she thought, "and what it says about that which we ought to do; for it is disagreeable

to be obliged to think that wrong which we don't wish to think so." John went on to tell them all about the rat changed into a dog; they laughed to hear him, and Rachel tried; "but the laugh fell back," as she said, "and became a grief on her heart;" and she was quite glad that her brother and sister, and Browne, did not hear him. "O that Bible! that Bible!" she thought.

"I was walking," he said, "down the street where I knew my lady lived who so loved dogs, poor foolish thing! I had walked some time, when she came out of her house, and I went whistling by her as careless as careless could be, patting my rat; she looked at me, and said, 'You are a gipsy.' 'I am proud to say I am,' said I, with a toss of the head. 'Where are you staying?' asked the lady. 'We camp for a few days in yonder dell.' 'What is that you are patting?' 'A dog, mam,' said I. 'A dog! a puppy.' 'Puppy! lady; it will never grow any more, it is a full grown dog.'"

"A lie and a cheat," thought Rachel, colouring; "O the book! what a book it is,

to be sure, to make me think so much of a lie and a cheat. Dear me, all my light-heartedness will go from me."

" 'I'll give you a sovereign,' said the lady. 'I couldn't take ten for it,' said I; and after a time she gave me ten. 'Hold it fast, madam,' I said, 'or it will be off if you don't, and back again to me.' 'The little affectionate creature,' she said, walking off with it. 'It is no bigger than a rat; is it a lady?' 'No.' 'Good-bye, gipsy.' I heard afterwards that the dog was no sooner put down in the room, than finding itself free, it ran up the curtain."

"I wonder," said Rachel, "what became of the rat. I trust they did not kill it."

"No, no," said the fellow; "I thought how much it cared for me, so I contrived to get it back again through one of the servants, to whom I gave five shillings."

"Well, I like you for thinking of your rat," thought Rachel; "Ella and Gabriel will be pleased with you too."

At night, when Rachel was lying down

by the side of her sister, she told Ella that she wished she had not listened to all that Browne had said of God and Jesus Christ; and she wished she had never heard him read that tiresome old scold and set-to-rights, the Bible.

“Hush!” said Ella, “don’t say so, for God will be angry to hear His book so spoken of. And did you not say the other day that the Bible was so kind and good in all it said?”

“I did. But now I wish I had never seen the book, and had never heard of God, for I have always the thought that an eye is over me, and I can do nothing that I used to do before.”

“But the eye that is looking down upon you is a kind eye,—don’t you think it is?”

“Yes, very kind; but still—”

“What?”

“Why, Ella, I can neither beg, lie, nor steal with any comfort, as I used to do; everything is wrong; and worst of all—”

"What? what? what?"

"How you do question me," said Rachel, peevishly.

"Do not let us talk any more about it, since it vexes you, Rachel."

"No," said Rachel, "I will tell you all. Worst of all, I hate to dance my gipsy hornpipe."

This was too much for Ella's gravity; she laughed so heartily that she quite shook the heap of clothes upon which she was lying, and Rachel did the same, and the girls could not stop their laughter for some time.

"I cannot help laughing to think how you take to heart not being able to dance that ugly hornpipe."

"Not only that," answered Rachel, "but I was not amused with Jolly John's rat-story. It may be very good to hear this beautiful heart-voice that you and Gab are always telling about; but I would give it to you with all my heart, nasty thing; for it is always saying, 'Don't do that, Rachel.' 'Are you right, Rachel?'"

"Do you always listen to its tones?" said Ella.

"Tones! Elly, it has no tones; it is as if it were a feeling, falling softly to the heart like snow."

"And you call the book that has sent you this voice, 'old scold' and 'set-to-rights?'"

"There, Ella, I was wrong, very wrong; and my heart has been telling me I was so ever since I said the words."

"Has the voice ever bid you do wrong?"

"No, I cannot say it ever has," answered Rachel; "but I hate a constant check. I wish I had not listened to you. No, I don't wish so either. Good night, Elly, girl; good night."

"Good night," answered her sister.

"I believe, after all, the voice is really a kind voice, and given to us by some very kind being that we cannot see, to keep us right. Good-night, good-night. There, give me a little more of the blanket, though;" and she pulled the blanket up again. Ella was too sleepy to answer; and

Rachel, saying, "You rude creature, you are not hearing a word of my pretty parle,"* soon fell fast asleep. And good angels watched round the bed of the untaught gipsy girls.

* Parle, used for talk in Dorsetshire.

CHAPTER X.

THE MEETING OF THE STANLEYS—THE YOUNG
GIPSIES GO ON A SPORTING EXPEDITION—
THE STORM.

EDWARD CLIFFORD THE FISHERMAN.

ON the evening of the 5th of November, at about eight o'clock at night, the Stanleys, with their chief, collected round a large fire in Lustleigh vale.

"Here we are," said Rachel, embracing first one and then the other, and hugging the little Michel, "here we are under our swirlie* auld oak ; blessings, blessings upon you all ! but where is the whins† ? ah ! and there, and I see in her auld place ; she has na moved

* Scotch for knaggy.

† Loose heap of stones.

a bit; but you have, Mic, for I declare you are grown."

Mic toddled away with Sheltie, full of importance; Sister Spot, who loved the child, for instinct told her that she had nothing to fear from it, gently put down its nose to the boy, and snuffed at its shoulder. Mic laughed beautifully, a child's laugh is beautiful; and leaving go of Sheltie's reins, threw his arms round the mare's head, and kissed its nose.

"There, Spotty, the darling," he said, "I give you a kiss, for I think you took my shouther* for guid† broo‡ maukin."§

"You have not forgotten your Scotch, Mic," said Rachel.

The Stanleys had not been all together for many weeks, and much noise, laughter, and gaiety, there was in the tents.

"Why, Elly," said Rachel, "you care not to-night for noise, and you lend your help to make it."

"Ay," said Ella, "but it is all softened down by heart-love, for to be again together after such a long parting."

* Shouther, Scotch for shoulder. † Quid, good. ‡ Broo, broth. § Maukin, hare.

"Yes," said Rachel, "and to hear the birdie Mic's laugh is as a turf fire to the heart in a cold night."

The young gipsies delighted in the granite country, which, they said, reminded them of some parts of Scotland. Scotland grown delicate and small. A troop, headed by Rachel and Renel, appeared before the chief's tent, and begged the patriarch and the heads of the tents to let them go on a roving scheme with their ponies, donkeys, and mules, for many days. Leave was given, but it was required of them to send a messenger to say where they were when settled, and they were desired not to go more than thirty miles north, south, east, or west.

They set off the next morning at daybreak at full speed. Rachel begged to be their leader, but many declared she should not, for she was even too wild for them. After riding for about twenty miles, they came to a lonely path which led down a precipitous rock to the sea; they were obliged to walk down the path, and the animals, well used

to smuggling parties, walked quietly after them, not attempting to leave them; here they amused themselves in various ways for many days in hunting, fishing, dancing, and racing.

"I'll go to the clachan,"* said Rachel, "and seek for a pawkie† carl to tune to us while we dance."

"And I'll go with you," said Willy the Wild, "and collect a few lads and lassies that will shake the foot merrily, and think it no shame to dance with the children of the tents."

Rachel and Willy were not unsuccessful; they returned in the evening with an old man; Rachel lent her shoulder to support his steps, and she carried the violin, and many girls and boys followed for an hour of frolic. We will not inquire if they had any angry words, on their return home, for dancing with gipsies, but they spent an evening that was worth sharp blows.

One day they went into a cave, in which

* Clachan—a small village about a church.

† Clever old man.

was an old crazy boat, that had been left there as unfit for use. Gabriel and others pulled it out, and declared they would have a sail in it.

"We'll put it on the sea," said Gabriel.

"Look at the heavens," said Browne, "a storm will soon rise."

"Who ever heard," said Ethric, "of gipsies being lost in a boat?"

"Push, push," said Reuben, "off with her."

The boat was soon launched, and nine boys, including Browne, got into her. Rachel gave her red cloak for a sail, and Ella her yellow handkerchief for a flag. For some time all went well; the sea was calm; but when they were far out at sea the winds rose and a violent storm came on—a storm foreseen by every fisherman. Rachel and Ella, and others who saw from the shore how the wind rose, and the waves dashed high, were panic-struck. Ella hid her face in her hands, and tried to pray, but she had been so little accustomed to pray, and her terror was so great, that she

could not. She wrung her hands, crying out, "Tell me, God, how to pray for them. Browne, Browne, what shall I say?" Browne could not hear her. Rachel ran up and down on the shore. An old man stood looking at the boat in such imminent danger. Rachel ran to him. "They must be lost," he said aloud, as she came up to him, "nothing can save them; the next wave will fill the boat, and she will sink—she must."

"Say not so," said Rachel; "say not so; but tell me," and she fell down at his feet, "tell me if you have ever stolen, or told a lie, or said a bad word—tell me!"

"My child," answered the old man, looking down on her.

"If you have not," she continued, "then pray to the God who can quiet the sea—who can and will hear you, and save the boat."

"They are saved!" cried the old man, "God be praised! they are saved! It nears them. They pull the boys in."

The gipsies had been seen by a young

fisherman, called Edward Clifford, who immediately put off to them, yet with little hope of saving them.

"Why," said one of his companions, as they came alongside of the boat, "they are fools of gipsies, who have put the old shell of a boat, Crazy Jane, on the waters."

"In with you," said Clifford, "for by Jove, you are fine fellows."

The boys were pulled into the boat, and in a second the Crazy Jane disappeared, and went to the bottom.

Rachel and Ella could only cry their joy, and the old man spread his hands towards them, and said, "My children, give God the praise." When the gipsies landed, he bid them all come round him, and kneel in prayer. They were so subdued by the danger they had escaped, that they fell with one accord upon their knees. The old man then offered up a thanksgiving to the merciful God who had sent their deliverers to their assistance.

Gabriel, Browne, Rachel, and Ella, prayed, though Rachel declared some time

after that at the time she knew little or nothing of what she was doing, she had so little thought of God. "I could," she said, "have done something if Good Luck had been the one to whom I was to pray." Ella did pray, for she remembered the words said by the poor man, whose prayer went up before God—"God be merciful to me a sinner." She repeated again and again, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and as she repeated the words the tears rained through her fingers.

The old man, lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, "My God, Thou hast saved these children from the waters, save their souls by Thy holy Spirit; let them love Thee and keep Thy commandments, that when their time to go hence is come, they may be received into Thy heavenly kingdom, through the merits of their Saviour, who died for them. Jesus, hear my prayer, and bless them."

"He is gone," said Rachel, "our dear old man of the storm, with his snowy head."

"Why did we not ask his name?" said Ethric.

“It was very stupid,” said Rachel, “but let us return to the cave.”

They did so, and they lighted a good fire, for it was very cold, and they warmed themselves, and they listened to Browne’s reading of the Bible, and one and all said it was a beautiful book to listen to, at any rate.

The fisherman, Edward Clifford, who had come to the gipsies’ assistance, was spreading his nets with his companions on the shingles, when a gipsy girl, with long raven hair hanging down her shoulders, came up to him, and taking Edward’s hand, and kissing it, said, “The gipsies will never take from you but will give unto you, and think a blessing for you when their thoughts are the best.”

“When are they likely to be good enough to think a blessing for us?” said Tom Smith; “when you are taking eggs from the farmyards, or when you are snatching at silver spoons from the dresser?”

“I have done so, and thought no harm in doing so, from the roof-people,” said Rachel.

"No harm to steal from the roof-people, then?" said Smith.

"No," said Rachel, "we have a poor silly thought of them, as if they were but the sloe-tree by the wayside, to be taken from."

"So you would liken us to the sour sloe," said Clifford, laughing, "that crinkles up the mouth?"

"No, not you," said Rachel; "I will liken you to the warm red berry that cheers winter; but he—for he crinkled up my heart to carry my thoughts so harshly and suddenly from the blessing I was wishing to you both, to the thoughts of the faults I would not now be guilty of. The wild bee has not dropped her honey on your heart, which was made with a smithy hammer, and not with the touch of a sweet flower."

The fisherman walked off, and Rachel, looking after him, said, "His heart is as coarse and rough as the dark leaf. The gipsies have the heart fine as the unfolding bud."

"Your spirit is up, gipsy."

"I am hurt," answered the girl.

"Tell me though, when are your thoughts the best?"

"And if I tell, will you be sure not to nip my words with cold frosty words like his?"

"No, surely, my little girl."

Now young Clifford feared God, for his mother had from his infancy talked to him of God and his Saviour, and brought him up, as far as lay in her power, in the paths of righteousness, and the widow had for years each Sunday led him to the house of God.

"Your voice," said Rachel, "and your look, tell me that you do not despise the gipsy girl; I think she may trust you."

"You may surely," said Clifford.

"Then," said she, in a low tone, "I will ask a blessing to you and yours, for I won't leave him out," and she pointed to Smith, who was at some distance; "after I have been thinking of Jesus Christ, He who is gone back to heaven after having died for

us, and who is so gentle, kind, and good. Browne has told us of Him; and have you ever heard of Him?"

"Yes, gipsy; I was a little one when my mother first told me of Him, and taught me how to pray to Him."

"There is one verse," said Rachel, that goes straight to my heart; went straight to all our hearts."

"What verse is that, gipsy?"

"It is a verse in which are only two words, and we felt it because we have many brothers and love them so very much; can you guess the verse?"

"I think I can," said Clifford, "'Jesus wept,' in the beautiful story of Lazarus."

"You have guessed right," said Rachel; "and when Browne read that story to us our eyes dropped tears to the ground, as the cloud drops rain on the tents." Here she paused, for her feelings were touched with the recollection of their sympathy with Mary and Martha. Then she went on to say, "I made Browne yesterday repeat a verse to me till I could say it as easily as a gipsy ballad."

"Cannot you read?"

"Not well," said Rachel; "indeed, very ill. I don't learn very fast; for if a bird flies past me as I am plodding at learning, I am up in a moment on my legs like the bird on its wing. I don't like to be obliged to be still."

"Do learn to read," said Clifford.

"Oh, I shall—I certainly shall. I am learning."

"What is the verse?"

"Let me see, can I remember it?" Yes. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not.' I think so much of these words, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not,' that I repeat them as I am busying about the fields; it is so loving to think that the great God who lives in heaven, should know exactly how the hen

scratches herself a place on the mould, and then sits down fondling on her brood. Then, to be sure, God made them, and gave them all their ways. Well to be sure, I never will steal again; since God, who spoke those gentle feeling words, likes us not to steal."

"Ahoy! ahoy!" cried Smith to Clifford.

"I must away," said Clifford, shaking Rachel's hand.

"Nay, but you must abide by me a moment longer," said Rachel, taking his hand, and kissing it, "for I have something to press upon you; take this gold ring, and keep it, and when your heart is down with the cares of life, look at it, and it will tell you you are kind, Edward Clifford, and then the dew that I heard tell of in the Prayer-book, the dew of God's blessing, will come upon you."

Clifford would not take the ring for some time, but she made him do so at last.

"Will you not all come and break bread and fling the salt over your shoulder with us?" said the gipsy girl. "Come — all come."

"Well, thank you, my child," said the young man.

"We are full of thankfulness," said Rachel; "and our hearts nigh burst to think what we can do for those that saved us."

"Give God the praise, my child," said Clifford, "for He it is who sent us, and had we not come up at the moment we did, they must have all gone to the bottom."

"I don't think the boat knew well how to keep out the water."

"It certainly did not," said Clifford, laughing.

"Why," said Smith, who now joined them again with Richard Hayden, "the Jane was left in the cave six years ago at least, as fit for nothing but fire-wood, and it is not likely to improve in knowledge with time."

"Where is the cave you call Gipsy Cave?" asked Philip Steward.

"On the other side of Dingle Daw," she answered, pointing to a jutting rock, "the large cave with many others opening into it."

"O I know," said Clifford, "the Smug-gler's Cave."

"I dare say it is," said Rachel; "will you come when you have spread your nets?"

"Take care," said Short, another fisher-man, "that the smugglers don't find you in possession of their cave."

"Smugglers and gipsies rarely quarrel," said Rachel, smiling.

"I'll be bound you know every smuggler within fifty miles distance," said Smith.

"I dare say I do; I am sure Jock and Charley do; and if report says true, fisher-men do, and send their boats out to them."

"Is it so?" said Clifford to Smith.

Smith answered by a knowing wink of the eye.

"Who are Jock and Charley?" asked Clifford.

"And are they not brothers?" answered Rachel; but I must away, and tell them who are in the cave that you are coming;" and she tripped away.

"She walks over the shingles," said Clifford, "as lightly as drifted foam; she is a pretty child."

Rachel returned to her companions in the cave, and they prepared for their deliverers all the good fare they could. The fishermen soon followed, and a happy evening they spent together.

"There again," said Rachel, when they were gone, "we quite forgot to ask who the old man was; perhaps I can catch them;" but from the entrance of the cave she saw the fishermen on the sea.

CHAPTER XI.

THEY GO IN PURSUIT OF THE OLD MAN OF
THE STORM—THE CHURCH BELLS—THEY
FIND THE OLD MAN.

NEXT morning after breakfast, the gipsies with Browne ascended the cliff by a winding path, called the Smuggler's Staircase; it was their only way to the village. The church bells pealed forth a merry peal.

"The bells are ringing," said Ella; "it is not Sunday."

"No," said Browne, "perhaps it may be for a wedding."

"Ah! Chance, and so it may," said Rachel.

"I love to hear the bells," said Ella,

"they pass by, as if hurrying to some spot, and had not a moment to lose."

"Where may they be hurrying, Ella?" asked Gabriel, smiling.

"I know if I were sound," said Rachel, "where I would go."

"Where?"

"Why, Elley, to the land where the talking castle was built long gone in time."

"Do you mean the tower of Babel?" asked Browne.

"Yes."

"Why," said Gabriel, "they could not talk much over the tower of Babel, for they could not understand each other."

"No, but before the change of words came upon them, I fancy they chattered like a company of daws and magpies."

"Rachel," said Browne, "you say things in such an odd way, that I cannot help smiling."

"Smile and laugh, then, for it is no more harm to smile than it is for a bird to sing. I am sure Jesus Christ," (and she said this with devotion,) "I am sure Jesus, who

took up the children from the midst of their play and blessed them, will not be angry with us for our joy of face. Have you a Bible?"

"Yes."

"Then," said Rachel, "just take it out and read it to us."

"Here," said Ella, "let us sit on this old tree. How the bells are ringing away!"

"Stop," said Rachel, "I want to look for something. Here it is," she said, taking a rusty pin out of a hole in the tree.

"What is it?" asked Ethric.

"A pin," said Rachel, "that I stuck in here last year, when Jocky brought me with him to buy brandy of the smugglers."

"Why in the world did you put that pin there?" said Gabriel.

"It was to remember the happy day I spent here with Jocky. I thought may be it might be many years ere I saw the old tree again, so I stuck it in, and called it Jocky Thorn. Lie still, thou pin, again in thine hole, and here is a companion for thee, to remember this happy moment by,"

and she put the rusty pin into the hole with another to remember that morning. "Now let us read."

"Where shall I read?"

"O where is told of the tower of Babel?" said Rachel.

Browne opened the Bible at the eleventh chapter of Genesis. "And the whole earth was of one language and one speech."

"I wish," said Rachel, "it were so now, and that the one speech were the gipsy language; but go on, Browne."

"And it came to pass as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Chinar, and they dwelt there."

"How fresh and nice that sounds!" said Rachel; "if they had had a plough now to plough up the ground, how fresh it would have smelt, and the wild flowers how bright and gay they were upon the earth in those days! don't you think so? but go on."

"And they said one to another, Go to, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar."

"Has it not a wild, free sound," said Rachel, "as if they were all as great and free as gipsies?"

"It has," said Reuben.

"Go on," said Rachel; and Browne went on reading, and Rachel was much pleased, for she had much taste for what was beautiful in language; and she did think the Bible had the prettiest stories in it of any book she had ever heard.

"The bells, I sorrow to say, have stopped," said Ella.

"In some parts," said Browne, "they think that on Sundays good angels come pouring out of heaven with their most beautiful wings on—church angels."

"Church angels!" repeated Ethric.

"Yes. Angels that sit by us in church; and they think that these angels come and sit down on the hills and in the fields waiting for the bells, and that the sound of the bells hurry and haste away to the angels to tell them to come, for all is ready. There are some verses upon it," said Browne.

"Tell them unto us," said Rachel; "do."

" Let me think.

" These bells, these bells, how glad they play
Upon this holy holiday ;
It seems as if from high were giv'n
Angels of love by pitying heav'n ;
And that these sounds were on their way
To bid them come with us to pray."

Ella liked the lines very much, and she begged Browne to repeat them, which he did.

" We have forgotten our friend of the storm," said Rachel ; " I am sure no angel from heaven could have given us more comfort than he did with his prayers yesterday."

" Indeed and you may say that," said Ella ; " he was as an angel to us."

" Browne," said Ethric, " let us return and go a fishing, for we are very many to go after the unknown man."

" Let us," said Browne.

" And when Gabriel, Rachel, and Ella have found him, then they will come and tell us, and we will go also."

" I think," said Browne, " it will be as well."

"Farewell, then," said Gabriel; "and when we have found him you shall know it."

Gabriel and the two gipsy girls went all over the village in search of the old man, who, they began to think, must be a good angel disguised as an old man.

"Suppose, after all," said Ella, "he should be an angel left with the villagers from last Sunday."

"I cannot fancy," said Rachel, "an angel like an old man."

"Why?" said Ella.

"Because," said Rachel, "Browne has told me that time has no footing in heaven; that all there is—what is the word?"

"What word?" asked Gabriel.

"The word that means for ever and ever—never to end?"

"Oh! I know—*eternal*," said Gabriel.

"To be sure, *eternal, eternal*," said Rachel.
"Now I hope I shall not forget it again."

"Yes," said Ella, "but he may have thrown off his beautiful heaven looks, and put on the looks of an old man who is wait-

ing for the door of heaven to be opened to him."

"Oh! I hope not so," said Rachel; "for only think, whilst he is talking to us, it may please him to put on his heaven looks again; dear me, if it be so, I won't go in search for him. I'll go back again to the rest."

"I am sure," said Gabriel, "it was a good old man, and no sham."

"Well, I think so too, and I will throw away my fear."

And the gipsy girl walked courageously forward, heading the little party.

After having searched in vain for more than an hour the children thought of returning.

"I am in despair," said Ella, "of our finding him, so we may as well return."

"Do you see that house close to the church, we have not peeped in at the windows?" said Gabriel.

"Let us run," said Rachel.

They all did so, and soon reached the church by the wild path.

"If I could remain under a roof two

whole days and not die the first, I could in this cottage," said Rachel.

"How pretty it is," said Ella, "with its ivy, and that clinging tree with all its red berries about it!"

The garden of the cottage was separated from the churchyard by a paling, round which were planted evergreens.

"Now I could see but for those trees," said Rachel; "how tiresome! I will climb over."

"Do not," said Gabriel, "do come back, Rachel."

But before Rachel was said, she was over, and peeping her head through the evergreens, which she pushed aside with her arms.

Though now December, yet the sun was so bright, that the drawing-room window of the parsonage was thrown open, and the old man whom they were in search of, and who, I must tell you, was the village rector, was sitting at breakfast. Robins, sparrows, and thrushes, with a fat solitary little wren, that popped about a bush like a little busy

body wishing to see and not be seen, were waiting round the window for the crumbs that they knew would soon be thrown to them. In this cottage might be witnessed "the peace, the contentment, the universal confidence and love, the melody of soul that is to be found only in the dwellings of the righteous," for the old man loved God, and so did the young orphans, his grandchildren.

"We have found you at last, dear old man," said Rachel, rushing forward from behind the evergreens, and jumping in at the window, "dear, dear snowy head," she said, hugging him round the neck, "great chief of the roof people, and have we found you at last? dear kind friend of the storm!" Then she knelt down, and looking up in his face, pressed one of his hands in her's.

Mr. Howard (for such was the name of the rector) thought he had never seen so beautiful a girl, her dark bright eyes looking up to him, and her long black hair waving over her shoulders.

"Bless us!" she cried; "cry down blessing on us, for you have saved Gabriel, for

God could not go on with the storm, as you were looking on. Gabriel, Gabriel, Ella, Ella, where are you?"

Ella and Gabriel, quite shocked at Rachel's conduct, had gone in search of a gate. They found one some little way off, and Rachel saw them coming through it; she blushed. "Forgive me," she said, "for I should have done as Ella and Gabriel have done, but I remembered your kindness, and your healing looks and words yesterday, and thought not of gates."

Mr. Howard laid his hand on her head, and said, "God bless you, and send his Spirit to you!" Ella and Gabriel came to the window, and he blessed them also.

"Come forward, Clara and Isabel," said the old man to his grandchildren, "and give my little friends some breakfast."

"Thank you, ladies, no; we have breakfasted," said Ella.

"Yet we will break bread with you," said Rachel, "and throw salt over our shoulder for good luck to you and all your house."

Each of the gipsies took a small piece of bread and sprinkled some salt over their left shoulder, saying this blessing in their gipsy language, "May the sun laugh upon you by day, and the fountains sparkle at your feet; may the moon smile softly upon you by night, and drive away sad darkness from your pillow."

"Come in, my children," said Mr. Howard to the gipsies, for they all stood on the window step, Rachel having retreated to her brother and sister. "Come in."

They did so; and Ella and Gabriel flung themselves at his feet; Rachel did the same, saying, with a half comic look, "Oh! that is what I should have done."

"No, no, gipsy girl, you did what your heart told you at the moment was right," said Mr. Howard.

"My heart was warm in love to you," said Rachel.

"It was, I feel sure," said the old man.

"And is, and is, and ever will be, sir," cried out the gipsy.

Ella now rose, and went to Isabel and

Clara, and taking their hands, kissed them, and said, "May the bonnie sun laugh on you by day, and send his light into your hearts for many, many years; and may boughs of golden apples hang over your dwellings; and may you be surrounded by those whom your hearts love!"

Mr. Howard was delighted with the wild gipsies, and calling them to him, said, "Lord Jesus, look down on these little children."

"Will you, sir," said Ella, "read to us from the Bible, and talk and say things of God to us? We know something about Jesus Christ, and we would know more."

"Willingly; Clara and Isabel, get chairs for them."

"No, thank you," said Rachel, "we don't often sit on chairs, so we shall not be able to listen so well."

"But you must not stand all the while," said Clara.

"No, we will sit down in our own way on the floor, if we may," said Rachel, "with our cloaks spread under us."

"I shall be obliged to leave you for half an hour," said Mr. Howard; "till my return, Clara and Isabel can show you their books and birds."

"We will, grandpapa," said the girls, quite delighted with their new companions.

When Mr. Howard retired into his study, Isabel and Clara took the gipsies into a room hung with cages, in which were wood-larks, bullfinches, black-caps, mountain finches, and canaries. Rachel scarcely looked at them.

"You don't like birds?" said Clara to her.

"I do, lady."

"You don't even look at them."

"No, lady, for I like them not in a cage; I like them in the free open air, with the sun gladdening the bushes and trees for them to fly to."

"I am sure," said Isabel, smiling, "the cages are beautiful."

"So they are, and so is yonder workhouse, —still it is a prison."

"Should you not like to live in a house with a beautiful garden?"

"I, lady? no; I am a Stanley, and a gipsy, how can I?" said Rachel.

"I wish," said Clara, "you could tell me what these birds are?"

"I dare say I can," said Rachel, "for I know most of the birds that fly."

"We caught these in the garden, and we have never seen any before."

"They are the mountain finch," said the gipsy girl; "the cold has been great, and this is the reason they came so low down into the country. They generally come no lower than Cumberland."

"Do they build in England?"

"No, they go off to Norway to build in the pines. Our people have brought them from thence."

"Do your people go to Norway?" asked Isabel.

"Yes," said Gabriel, "our men leave the tents to go there for bear-hunting."

"Do they sing?" asked Clara.

"No," said Ella.

"But they look wild," said Rachel, "and they have a restless wing; they flit from

side to side ; they are birds of passage. Lady, let them go ; do, lady, let them go."

" Shall we, Isabel ?" said Clara.

" With all my heart ;" and they took down the cage and opened it, and the birds flew out, and Rachel rejoiced to see them free again, and she said, as she watched them,

" Go to Norway, and bid Ziba return to his tent, for his mother sadly moans him."

" Who is Ziba ?" asked Clara.

" Our cousin, from the tent of Daniel Stanley. Daniel Stanley is our uncle, and Ziba his son,—so the far-gone Ziba is our cousin."

" Was he wicked, and left his mother who moans for him ?" asked Isabel.

" If he were wicked, lady, would I tell so of one who is of my blood ? No, that were a poor trick for my heart to play."

" Why did he leave you ?"

" Ziba," said Rachel, " was very beautiful to look on ; and his mother loved him countries beyond any of her other children, because he was so beautiful to look on, and so bright to speak to, and so tender in heart

and temper ; so, lady, she gathered together all her heart from her other children, and gave it entirely to him."

"And after all this love," said Clara, "did he leave her? It was a poor return for such love."

"And you may say so," said Rachel, "for she loved him with the love of a thousand mothers all in one; but he left her, for he loved danger, though so young, and he went to seek it in Norway. He left the tents without saying a word to any, for he knew if he spoke of what he meant to do, the chief would speak the word, and he could not go."

"What word," said Isabel, "could keep one so roving in heart at home?"

"See that he leave us not," said Rachel; "then all would have watched the boy Ziba, and he would have been clever to get away."

"Is your chief angry with him?" asked Clara.

"O no! we none of us are in our hearts, for he is so beautiful and brave; and the

chief was, himself, as great a runaway as any in the land, till age cast a log about his foot."

"How do you know that he is in Norway?"

"Many have returned from the land of pines and rocks, and told of him, and they all call him the brave young boy; and they say, the Stanleys may glory in him, for that he is a lovely flower to belong to any tent."

"Does he write to his mother?" asked Clara.

"No, he cannot write," said Rachel; "but he sends messages tender and soft to her, and his father; and he says, good luck standing by him, he shall be in the tents again soon with the skin of a bear that he has killed, with a bonnie silver skewer to bind it round her neck, for his mother, whom he loves like dawn on a hunting morn, and the horns of a Norway stag for his father, whom he would die to save."

"I wish dear Ziba," thought Ella, "knew of the God who has saved us all."

"You never seem," said Clara, "to be

angry with one another ; does no one control you ?”

“ We love one another,” answered Rachel ; “ and that is the chain that binds us ; then how can the gipsy do wrong to each other, for everything is in common ?”

“ Could you not be happy in the workhouse ?”

“ Rachee happy in a workhouse !” answered Gabriel, laughing merrily. “ I should like to see her there ; she would pine away in an hour, and then die. When she passes what she calls the poor man’s cage, she turns away her head not to see it.”

“ I should,” said Rachel, “ droop my wings the first day, and die away quite the next.”

“ Gabriel,” said Ella, (a sudden thought striking her,) Gabriel turned to listen ; “ could you not run to tell Browne and the rest, who will come ? We told them we would call them as soon as we had found the one whom we sought.”

Gabriel left the room by the window, and ran off for Browne and the other gipsies.

"Browne does not," said Isabel, "sound to me much like a gipsy name : it is a name very common in our village."

"He is not a gipsy," said Ella.

"Why then does he live with you?"

Ella told the orphan's story, and Isabel and Clara pitied him much, and they had tears in their eyes.

"You are kind, ladies," said Rachel, "and feel for the unhappy ; and may you be blessed with many who will feel for you should sorrow weigh heavy upon you ; for kindness to each other is like sun on the field, it gladdens and makes happy."

While they were speaking, Mr. Howard came into the room, and said, "Where is the gipsy boy whom I left here?"

Isabel told him who he was gone in search of.

"Browne," said Clara, "is not a gipsy ; but a poor shepherd-boy who they have taken care of."

"Tell grandpapa his story," said Isabel.

Ella told his story, and she had not finished it when Gabriel, Browne, and Ethric

came in. Mr. Howard had no difficulty in distinguishing Browne from the gipsies. He bid them all sit round him, and he gave up the whole morning to them, and they sat round him on the floor, and he told them of Jesus Christ. Ethric, who was rather sorry at first that the old man had been found, as he thought fishing better than listening to his grave talk, as he called it, and his prayers, so liked the kind pleasant way in which Mr. Howard told of the kind Saviour who came down to die for them, that he said he should often go to hear him instead of going fishing and idling about the fields.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GIPSIES GO INTO A CHURCH FOR THE
FIRST TIME—RACHEL'S FRIGHT—CONVER-
SATION UNDER THE YEW TREE—RETURN
TO THE CAVE.

NEXT morning the church bells again rang, and the gipsies determined to hurry to the parsonage to know from Mr. Howard why they were ringing. They found their kind friend with his grandchildren in the churchyard; the gipsies stopped to wait their approach, and Gabriel, bowing low, came forward, and asked why the bells were ringing.

"We have prayers every morning," said Mr. Howard. "This is God's house, and

Jesus loves to see his children in his father's house."

"May we go in?" asked Rachel.

"Will God like to see us there?" asked Ella, timidly; "for it must be a great thing to be in His house."

"God will rejoice to see you there," said Mr. Howard; "and He has told us that He will be in the midst of us."

"Will God, indeed, be in the midst of us?" said Rachel; "kind gentleman, good gentleman, keep close to me, then I shall not fear."

"My child," said the old man, "fear not, nothing will hurt you in God's house; for He has said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst.'"

"In the midst of us!" said Rachel. "I'll not go in then;" and she started back with a frightened look.

"You will not see God, my little one," said Mr. Howard, smiling at her terror; "but His Spirit will be with us, and He will look upon us from His throne."

"May not good angels be all around us, though we cannot see them?" asked Ella.

"We may think," said Mr. Howard, "that they are always around us, doing God's bidding, and watching and tending us. They are God's servants."

They now reached the porch door, and Rachel trembled from head to foot at the thought of going into the church.

"I wish to goodness I had never come," she said to herself; "but I suppose I have not much goodness in me, or I should not be so much frightened."

Clara went into her pew, and Isabel whispered to the gipsies to follow her, and she opened a pew door; "Go in there," she said.

"No," said Rachel, "I cannot, and will not, lady, be shut up in that box."

"There is nothing to fear," said Isabel.

"Indeed, then, but there is a great deal to fear. If an angel should come in, and we could not get out! I am sure the bells have been ringing fast enough, and loud enough, to bring them all down upon us. Lady,

don't ask me to go in, for I am not good enough to meet one who is just come from God, and I must be off if I see one in the church." Isabel could scarcely keep her countenance at the gipsy's fright. "Let me stay here in this passage; do, lady, do!"

"No, you must not stay here in the aisle," said Isabel; "grandpapa will not like it."

"Then leave the door quite wide open," said Rachel.

"Ajar," said Isabel, leaving the pew.

"No, quite open," said Rachel to herself, pushing it back with her foot.

After prayers the gipsies left the church, and Rachel sprang forward as she felt the air in the porch. "I am glad it is over," she whispered to Ethric, "I am the free gipsy again!" They went and stood under an old yew tree, waiting for Mr. Howard. The school children passed down the path close to them.

"Poor miserable creatures!" said Rachel. "Fancy, Gabriel, our walking in twos, with the eye of a master always on us."

Gabriel looked disgusted.

"Yet they look, I must say, very happy," said Ella. "Look at that pretty little rosy girl, she is looking at us, and I dare say, whispering about us."

"I dare say she is," said Rachel. "Well, since they must be in bondage, and the task-master always close to them, I am glad they are happy."

"How joyous it is," said Gabriel, "to be able to look awide and away over to those hills, and to feel that we have nothing to serve but our own free wills, and to rest upon our own free thoughts."

"Well, my children," said Mr. Howard, joining them, "did you like the prayers?"

"Yes," said Gabriel and Ella. "And we know many of them," said Gabriel, "for Browne has often read them to us."

"I heard you say, sir, 'from the continual dew of thy blessing,'" said Ella, "which we think such a pretty saying."

"We cannot but think," said Gabriel, "of the flowers that seem so glad in the dew, and of the colours that look so bright under the drop."

"I was so frightened," said Rachel, "that I did not hear one word."

"What frightened you?" asked Mr. Howard.

"I was looking out for angels all the time; and then I have not, you know, listened to the prayers so often as Gabriel and Ella, for I cared little or nothing for God before the storm: now I feel I love God. Before the storm I only feared Him as one I could not get away from."

"You would neither sit, stand, nor kneel, in the right places," said Ella.

"I was so dreadfully frightened all the time; I was so afraid that an angel would come in, and then I should not be able to make a run of it."

"Why did you keep staring at the pillars and arches?" asked Browne.

"I must say they frightened me a little," said Gabriel; "for I saw no nails, nor anything to keep them all together."

"Well, Gab," said Rachel, laughing, "and I am glad you were a little frightened; for I never was in such a fright in my life; no,

never. I thought what between the arches, and pillars, and angels, I never was in such a wisht place in my life as a church."

"And if an angel had appeared," said Isabel.

"Ah! and then how could I have looked, so often as I have stolen and told lies to get money? The angel might have looked at me with one of his heaven looks; and asked me if I had ever done such things; and what could I have answered the clean-hearted angel, with his beautiful wings? I should have been dumb before him, and he would have opened his wings, and gone straight to God with my wicked story."

"Fear not, little gipsy," said the old man, "God will not be harsh with you, if you come with an humble spirit to His house, and determined to do all in your power for the time to come to please Him."

"Tell me, sir, how am I to make my heart strong to please God?"

"Watch and pray; pray through Jesus Christ, who can alone strengthen you, who came down to die for you."

"When any bad thoughts come upon me, what am I to do?" said Rachel; "for they stick sometimes to me like burrs, and I cannot get rid of them."

"Then," said Mr. Howard, "turn away from these thoughts, and talk to one of your companions, or say to yourself the Lord's Prayer. I think if you only say, 'Our Father,' really feeling that He is your Father, you will lose the thought that torments you with its wickedness, and that grieves His holy Spirit."

"Sometimes," said Rachel, "they say bitter, very bitter things to me in the tents; then I say bitter things again: should I do so? You will say I should not."

"I do," said Mr. Howard; "God bid one of the apostles say, 'And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.'"

"And be ye kind one to another!" repeated Rachel. "I think we are generally kind one to another."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Howard, "God has

given you all good tempers and cheerful hearts."

"I think He has," said Rachel, "unless it be in a black east wind, then we are sometimes very snarling; at least the men are so to us girls, bidding us get out of the way."

The old man smiled at the girl's simplicity and openness: "If God," he said, "has given you a good temper and good heart, watch over this temper and heart, and thank God for having bestowed two of the greatest blessings on earth upon you; and consider it as a blessing given by God, and not as a merit of your own. Do you always forgive one another, as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you?"

"Do we?" said Rachel, colouring, and looking archly at Gabriel.

"No," said Gabriel, "if they curse, we curse; if they fight, we fight."

"Then," said Mr. Howard, "curse not, fight not, for God will not let you go to heaven if you do; and now go home, my children, and think upon what I have told you."

The gipsies, thanking him for his kindness, turned down the path that led to the moor, and Mr. Howard and his grandchildren returned to the parsonage. Ethric, on his return to the cave, begged Browne to teach him to read, and to talk to him of God.

CHAPTER XIII.

THEIR RETURN TO THE CAVE—THEY INVITE
TWO OLD MEN TO DINNER—SOME VILLAGE
GIRLS ASK RACHEL TO TELL THEIR FOR-
TUNES.

ON their return to the cave, they found the rest of the gipsies over a fire, the smoke of which made its way through an aperture in the top of the roof, and wreathed itself in columns round an old oak, covered with ivy.

“Where have you been?” said Telic, from Ben’s tent; “you have lost rare sport, by not being with us; we have caught a fine John Dorey, for which we were offered half-a-crown on the spot.”

"Ethric," said his sister Leila, "why have you not been with us for the last two or three days?"

"Don't ask questions," said Ethric, "unless you mean to come with us."

"Not I," said Leila; "but now that you are come lend a hand in cooking."

"What have you here?" said Ethric, uncovering a kettle.

"A turkey," said Leila, "and Gab need not fear to touch it, for it was bought with the half-crown."

"When will it be ready?" said Rachel, "for I am uncommonly hungry."

"In about an hour," answered Leila.

"Have you any potatoes?" asked Ethric.

"O yes, and greens too, and onions and turnips."

"And here in this kettle is a game soup," said Telic, "but Gab, you must not taste a drop, for it is all poached game."

"You will leave us the turkey, then, for we five cannot touch the soup," said Rachel, laughing.

"You not touch it?" said Telic; "why,

Rachey, you don't mean to say that you won't touch it? there is no grouse or black cock, it is true, for we can't get them here as we can far north, but there is everything else in the soup that is good. Three ducks," she whispered into Rachel's ear, "that Willy the Wild's fox-terrier snatched from a pond five miles from hence; you know the fox pilfers not round home."

"Hush, hush!" said Rachel.

"Hush, hush!" repeated Telic; "why, Rachel, you look as pale as death; do you think the owner of the ducks is near?"

"One more to be feared, much more," answered Rachel, hurrying away.

Telic turned to her soup-kettle, and said, as she stirred up the good things in it, "I don't know what is come over the girl."

Rachel left the cave, and kneeling down on the sea-shore, she stretched her arms towards the sea, and looking up, said, "God, kind God of the storm, you heard her,—Jesus Christ who died for us, you heard her,—angels, servants of God, who have heaven in your hearts, you heard

her,—Jesus Christ, ask God to take away our sins; He cannot, will not say No to you: and let not all the angels leave us, but still let them tent about us. Jesus Christ, I look to thee; make us all good." Then she rose, and returning to the cave, mingled with the rest.

"Here you are, Rachel," said Ella, "dinner is ready; let us, since we have so many good things, see if we can find any to call in to come to our dinner."

Ella went out, and after a time returned with two old men whom she had found breaking stones on the road, and the gipsies made them sit down and dine. Reuben and Abel, his brother, went to a cask, and taking from thence some brandy, gave each of them a stoop of it. "Well, good luck to the smuggled brandy," said Willy the Wild, "since it has cheered the aged hearts." One of the old men shook his head, and begged for some hot water to weaken his with; Rachel took a kettle from the fire, and poured some hot water into the old man's mug, and put some sugar into

it, and sipping it, she gave the brandy-and-water to the old tired labourer. When the old men had dined, they left the cave blessing and thanking the gipsies. They failed not to tell in the village how kindly they had been received in the cave, saying nothing, however, of the smuggled brandy, and when they again went into the village they were received smilingly by all, and every face was turned kindly to them.

It happened that the schoolmistress was the daughter of one of the old men, and hearing that Rachel and Ella were very anxious to learn to read, she begged them to come every day to read with the children, and to hear Mr. Howard explain the Scriptures. The girls were delighted to see the gipsy Rachel spring into the school-room, for she told them many gipsy and bogle stories; and she told them of fairies in the glens, and of witches in the bogs. One day Rachel was dancing on her way early in the morning, singing and knitting, and looking up to the distant hills, when she met two or three girls who had left their homes to seek the gipsy girl.

"We have sought you everywhere," said the villagers.

"The sun is high and the shadows long," said Nancy, "so we knew you would be out and about amongst them all."

"Gipsies," said Rachel, "on a sunny day are like gnats sporting in the sunbeams, so we gipsies say; but what would you with me?"

"To tell our fortunes."

"I cannot," said Rachel; "the unmarried gipsy never tells fortunes; besides, I will never tell a fortune."

"Why?"

"God," said the gipsy, "loves it not; it is wicked so to do."

"Why wicked?"

"When the gipsy," said Rachel, "tells a fortune, she pretends to a power that God has not given her, and she knows full well that God has not given her this power."

"Cannot a gipsy tell a fortune, then?" said one of the girls.

"My people," answered Rachel, "would be angry with me for saying no—but I do

say no—God has not sent the what will be—the prophecy of to-day or to-morrow, or the next month, or the next year, to the gipsy more than the roof people.”

“Must all the story of what will be, come from God?” asked one of the girls.

“From whom can it come but from God?” answered Rachel. Mr. Howard told us the other day that it was very wicked to tell fortunes, for all gipsies know they cannot, and that God who made us only can.”

“Yet I have heard,” said one of the girls, “of a gipsy who told one of our maidens a great deal of what had but just happened, and that did happen to her afterwards.”

“All chance,” said Rachel; “and a wicked thing it must be in us to say we can tell what God has hidden on purpose from us—hidden most likely for our good.”

“Why,” said Nancy, “if the gipsy cannot tell fortunes, it is a very wicked thing to say she can, for it is taking to oneself a power that God has only in himself—of

seeing and knowing what will come to pass."

"Yes, Nancy, now is it not so?" said Rachel; "and Nancy and all of you, is it not pleasant for a gipsy girl and roof girls to be thus talking of God to one another? it is like pretty flowers in a garden talking to a seed of thistle-down that rests near till the next stream of wind shall blow it on its way."

"So often," said a girl, "what a gipsy has said has come true."

"Gipsies," said Rachel, "never tell fortunes till they have been some time in a place gathering news from chance chat that they fall in with as they go round about gathering stories of the roof people, and then they go to the persons to whom the stories belong and tell them, and they, poor souls, think God has told our tribes."

"I wish," said Fanny Nutcombe, "you could tell me if Charles will return safe from sea and marry me."

"I will pray, and ask God to let him," said Rachel; "and I will try to keep my

mind on good thoughts and words, that my prayers may get to heaven ; for Mr. Howard says the gipsies' prayers find room to get in."

" If the door of heaven were no bigger than the hole in a nut-shell, yet," said one of the girls, " the mercy of Jesus Christ is so great, that all the prayers of every one alive can find their way in at once."

" Did your mother say that?" said the enthusiastic gipsy girl ; " then great is your mother's faith, and happy must she be, as she sits under the roof."

" I will pray to God," said Fanny.

" Do," said Rachel ; " He saved my brother and others, for He sent the boat to them just in time, or they must all have perished ; and I will pray for him every day, and on Sundays I will pray with my best heart ; and now farewell, maidens of the cottages, the girl of the hills and valleys wishes you all joy of heart."

They parted, and Rachel went on her way singing and knitting as she went. " I must work hard," she said, " for my mother

shall not suffer because God has taught me to fear Him ; I will, besides knitting and other work, make mats of the sweet heather, whose freshness will come up each time the foot falls on it ; and my pretty wild flower nosegays, and my fans worked with the fibres of leaves (which all say are so prettily worked together) they will buy them of the gipsy girl." She went on walking and talking in this happy way to herself, when she met with Ella ; they continued on their way till they came to a stream. Here they sat down for a time on some stones, listening to the murmur of the waters.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOCK AND BALL ARRIVE FROM THE STANLEY
TENTS—ROBIN HOOD.

TORRIBIUS AND CLOSELINA.

WHEN they entered the cave, they found Jock and their cousin Ball from the tent of Benjamin.

"Jocky!" cried Rachel and Ella, springing forward to meet him.

"My girls," said Jocky, kissing them, "I am come for you; we cry out for you, and miss you, and you must return."

"Not till after Sunday," said Rachel.

"Sunday," said Jock, "what is Sunday to you, Rachey?"

"Much now, Jockey."

Ella told of the storm and of Mr. Howard's kindness to them, and Jock felt grateful to him for *his* kindness; but as for God, Jock, alas! was indifferent upon that subject.

"Well," he said, "you church-going people may remain here till after Sunday, but as for the rest they must return."

"I will stay," said Ethric.

"Ah! and are you a church-seeker, swearing Ethric?"

"Yes," said Rachel, "he is; don't be afraid to say so."

"Afraid!" said Jock; "the thoughts of a gipsy are as free as his footsteps; why should he fear?"

"I fear not," said Ethric; "I own I love going to church, and I fear not to own that I love not to swear; it is hated by God, and therefore I wish to hate it."

"If you think it wrong to swear, don't swear; I do not think it wrong, and therefore I do swear," said Jock.

"One day, may be," said Ella, "you will not like to swear."

"When I think it wrong, I will not," said Jock, "you may be sure of that."

"Do you think," said Gabriel, "we may stay till after Sunday without incurring the chief's anger?"

"Or the anger of our tent?" added Rachel.

"I'll take upon myself to say you may, and if any blame fall, let it fall upon me."

"A Jockey at a pinch," said Rachel, merrily; "but must you return—are you quite obliged?"

"Yes," said Jock, "our chief expects us by dawn; we must be on our way. Two ponies will be enough for you five, for it is not more than twenty miles from our tents."

"Spot and Sheltie will be enough for us," said Gabriel.

"Well, Rachey," said Jock, "are you very much in love with Sheltie?"

"It is a nice creature, as swift as a deer, and as wild as the black cock."

"I'll give it to you," said Jock.

"Now there's a bonny birdie of a brother," said Rachel, jumping up and throw-

ing her arms round his neck; "Jockey, thou art dear to me for thy kindness, my brother."

It was still dark when Jock and his companions left the cave. Rachel had heaped turf on the fire that had not been allowed to go out all night, and she and her sister had prepared many a porringer of hot soup. It was a cold, snowy morning, and as they jumped from crag to crag the air blew keen and chill upon them, yet this they cared not for, and they hurried on, driving the ponies, mules, and donkeys, before them, and whistling to the dogs. As Jock was leaving the cave, Rachel put five shillings into his hand, saying, "Give that to our mother, and tell her, with my love and duty, that I have gained that for her by works of my hands, and that she must not be angry if I say, and say it I must, I will never lie, beg, nor steal again."

"Steal!" said Jock, "what gipsy steals? he only takes what comes in his way."

"Very much the same," said Rachel, laughing, "and I for the time to come will not do so."

"I'll give it," said Jock, putting the money in his pocket.

Jock and his companions, as they wound round Ness height, sang,

"So blithe as the linnet in the green wood,
So blithe we'll wake the morn,
And through the wide forest of merry Sherwood
We'll wind the bugle horn."

"He was a bold, generous fellow, and I wish he were now in Sherwood Forest; I would go to him, for a gipsy might be proud of such a chief."

"Who are you speaking of, Jockey?" asked Wild Willy.

"Of Robin Hood."

"Who might he be?"

"The bold outlaw of Sherwood Forest," said Jock. "I heard much of him when I was at Locksley."

"Locksley, Locksley!" said Abel, "oh! Locksley in the north."

"Not in Scotland," said Jock.

"No, I mean the north of England, in Nottinghamshire, the people of Locksley

are proud of his name, as they may well be, for he was a prince of robbers, and only took from the rich to give to the poor."

"But the rich, Jock," said Telic, "had a right to their own—you have a larger stick than Abel, or Willy, or Simon, yet you would hardly expect them to come and wrench it out of your hand."

"No," said Jock, throwing up his stick and then catching it in the middle, and shaking it at Willy, who looked back over his shoulder, grinning at him, "come and take my stick, if you dare."

"Go on to tell us of Robin Hood, Jockey," said Telic.

"Robin Hood," said Jock, "lived in times far, far gone back from these, when the world was a lad, and had not a grey hair in his head."

"Time far gone back indeed, that must have been," said Willy the Wild.

"And so it was," said Jock; "and in those days the rich cruelly treated the poor and these oppressors Robin Hood attacked and took from them to give to the poor."

"I should like to have known the names of some of his friends."

"I can tell you," said Jock, "some of their names; there was little John and William Scadlock, who was called Scarlet, and George A'Green, the pound-keeper of Wakefield, and Muck, the miller's son, and a friar named Tuck, a merry jovial fellow."

Then Jock burst forth wildly,

"What life is there like to bold Robin Hood,
It is so pleasant a thing a,
In merry Sherwood he spends his day
As pleasantly as a king a."

"Robin Hood," said Willy, "must have been a rare fellow; he would not have disgraced a gipsy; maybe he had fine old gipsy blood in his veins."

"No, he had not a drop of the tent blood in his veins; however, people say high blood ran through him for all that; he was, they say, Earl of Huntingdon, and his real name Robert Fitzooth, which was changed into Robin Hood."

"I wonder," said Abda, "what made

him leave his equals to herd with other people; he showed no rich blood in that."

"No," said Jock, "the man of true blood should remain in the tent in which he is born, neither seeking nor avoiding those fate has placed above him, and not herding with those below him. The wren should stay with the wren, the wild swan with the swan, and the eagle remain on his mountain with the eagle."

"Mixing, however, in good fellowship," said Clancon.

"Yes," said Jock, "twining round each other in good fellowship, yet still remaining in the place fate has ordered for him in this life."

"Is any reason given," asked Abda, "for his taking to this roving life?"

"Yes," answered Jock "they told me that he was outlawed for debt and riot, and so he took to this roving life." Then Jock repeated to them "The lamentation for Robin Hood."

"How did he die?" asked Mary.

"They say," said Jock, "that a lady

blooded him, for in those days ladies were well skilled in herbs and bleeding."

"How droll!" said Telic.

"Yes," said Jock, "and they say this lady was very rich, so I suppose that she and her rich friends had lost by Robin, and the lady, wicked woman! let him bleed to death."

A groan of indignation was heard from the gipsies.

"Maybe it is not true," said Jock, "for so many lies are told of what happened yesterday, that big lies may be told of so many years ago."

"No," said Telic, "we are not obliged to believe what is told us of so many years ago, if it be disagreeable; so we will think that Robin Hood lay his head to die of his own accord under a green tree."

"We will, we will," cried they all; "we will," echoed from rock to rock. Jock sang again,

"Our lives are wholly given to hunt
And haunt the merry green wood,
While our best service is daily spent
For our master, Robin Hood."

At this moment, Torribius and Closelina, the gipsies, stood before them; they came suddenly upon them from a footpath that wound through a wood—and they sang in chorus,

“When our best service is daily spent
For our master, Robin Hood.”

The gipsies set up a shout of delight when Torribius and his sister Closelina made their appearance, for they had not been seen or heard of for more than a year, and many thought they had returned to Spain, from whence they came.

“My dear fellow,” said Jock, springing to Torribius, and shaking him violently by the hand, “from whence?”

“Norway,” said Torribius, “where I have been hunting the bear; we crossed over from the Shetlands.”

“We remained in the Isles of Lofaden for some little time,” said Closelina.

“In what island?” asked Jock.

“In Rust,” said Closelina.

“Then where did you go?”

“To Oyroe,” said Torribius, “where we

remained some time, hunting with great success, and then came further south, and hovered round the Rys Lake, a small lake in the centre of the country; here we collected other skins, and I went daily to the mountains, and seldom returned without the skin of a bear."

"Who do you think," said Closelina, "I met on the banks of the Welf Fiord, a small river very near the lake?"

"One of our tribe?" asked Jock.

"Yes," said Torribius; "he wore the Stanley badge."

"He is in tender years, the first bloom has not left his cheek, and his eyes fill at the name of his mother," said Closelina.

"Ziba," said Jock, "the young Ziba, was it not he?"

"It was," said Closelina; "there is not such a flower in all the tribes; the step of the young creature is springy as the chamois, and his eye is as the wild hawk's; life's break of day smiles in him, and he is most beautiful to look upon."

"He went from our tents last year as a

bright and happy dream," said Telic, "and his mother weeps for him."

"She will not weep long," said Closelina; "he will soon return; in four months he will be with you. I sat down with him by the river for upwards of an hour, and we talked of the tents, and England; and when he spoke of his mother he wept as a forgotten infant."

"He wears," said Torribius, "a stained bear skin, prepared with his own hand, and clasped round the throat with a silver skewer."

"It must become him," said Telic.

"It does," said Closelina; "and he wears it in all his toils, that his mother may value it the more when he returns, for it is for her."

"There will be sounds of joy when he returns to us," said Jock; "and his mother will wail for gladness."

"Well, I am glad to see you," said Torribius; "and it rejoices my heart to find myself near the Stanley tribe; we shall linger with you many days."

"Say months," said Jock.

"Early in the spring," said Torribius, "we are off for Ireland, Closelina and other of our women will go with us to tell fortunes, for the girls of Ireland will believe any nonsense."

"Some of the Stanleys shall join you," said Jock, "I, for one, will; we are working hard at our fishing-nets, and they will be finished soon after Christmas."

"Be it so," said Torribius; "how far may we be from the tents?"

"About five miles as the crow flies."

"And as the gipsy walks, I presume?" said Torribius, following the gipsies over a ditch. They hurried on without speaking for more than a mile.

"Dip down into this wood," said Jock; "boys, call the dogs in, we may not make ourselves odious; all around us are friends."

The dogs were called in; Closelina saved, by her entreaties, two or three runaways from the lash. Late in the evening they spied from a height the encampment.

"Rejoicing will be in our tents when

they know who we have with us," said Willy the Wild.

They did rejoice ; so did the mother of Ziba, and long after midnight might be heard sounds of revelry.

CHAPTER XV.

THEY LEAVE THE CAVE AND RETURN TO
LUSTLEIGH.

THE Sunday following the gipsies went to church, and the school children looked down from the gallery upon them. They went at an early hour the next morning to the rectory, for they were to leave the cave on Tuesday by daybreak, to return to the encampment. When they were about to leave the rectory, Mr. Howard put a note into Gabriel's hand, and bad him give it to Mr. Stephens, the clergyman of Lustleigh, the parish in which the gipsies had pitched their tents.

"I shall never like to hear him," said

Rachel, "after you, sir; and if I do like to hear him, I shall hate myself, for I shall think I am forgetting you."

"Forgetting you!" said Ella, the tears rolling down her cheeks, "I am sure the bird will as soon forget its unfeathered ones; sir, sir, what shall we do without you?"

"I would not be forgotten by you," said Mr. Howard; "and I trust you will never forget me, I shall not forget *you*, but pray for you in my prayers."

"In all your prayers," said Ella; "don't leave us out in one, for we shall want every one you can give us."

The old man was much affected by the gentle girl's burst of grief, and Rachel threw her arms round her sister, and bid her not give herself so to sorrow.

"Recollect, my children," said Mr. Howard, "that we are all messengers sent by God, and that it is the word of God that we are bid to love, and that we must not think of the preacher who tells us of the kind Jesus."

“Don’t, please don’t, say that it is wrong to love you, for we cannot help it, for you have given us all such comfort,” said Ella; “and I—I can only think of heaven, and God, and of you, who made me think of Him.”

“Love me, do love me, and in your prayers remember me, my child. Remember you I will—I will.”

“Oh, sir,” said Ella, throwing herself on her knees before him, “lay your hand, both your hands on my head, and beg a blessing to come down on me.”

All the gipsies followed her example, and they sank on their knees before him. When he had blessed them, they returned to the cave. Ella was so tired with weeping and sorrow, that she went into an inner cave, and there she lay herself down and slept. They went to look for her, and they found her on the sand fast asleep; they put a cloak under the head of the tender thing, as they called her, and they covered her with a blanket, and Rachel watched her till her sleep was over.

At night, when all were asleep, Ella rose, and taking Gabriel's sheep-skin coat, cast it round her, and stole out of the cave. With rapid steps she made her way to the rectory; she went into the garden, and kneeling down in a stream of moonlight, she clasped her hands together, and prayed—"Lord Jesus, Son of Mary—the tender friend of Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus, bless one and all in this house, and oh! bless Mr. Howard particularly. Let us all one of these days meet in the world above, where they say all is so happy, and pleasant, and where Jesus Christ is sitting at the right-hand of God, ready to take our prayers to Him, and to beg for us. Let every gipsy come to you, my God—let all in the tents love you—let all know you—and let poor Ziba come to know you, my God, for he has a kind heart—let, then, this heart be thine!"

After this prayer, she got up, and crossing her hands upon her bosom, she looked to the window of Clara's and Isabel's room, and she could not utter, for fulness of heart,

all the blessings she wished them. Upon returning, finding the fire still burning bright in the outer cave, she sat down and warmed herself, and then went and lay down by Rachel, and was soon fast asleep.

The next morning they left "the good man's country," (such was the name Rachel had given it,) thinking they would soon return to see Mr. Howard; they all turned to gaze at the rectory, to give one longing gaze from the last hill that looked down upon it. All but Ella descended the hill; she remained fondly gazing upon the now distant house and garden; then very slowly she turned to join her companions.

Great was the joy in the tents when the children, with Sister Spot, and Sheltie, joined them. Torribius was struck with Rachel's great beauty, and he declared that she would be as the spreading oak for beauty; and Ella, the little flower to shelter under it. A few reproaches were heard, and Ruth said, "Why have you left us so long? many suns have risen and set since you were here."

"Mother," said Rachel, "though you saw us not, yet each day, each hour, each minute, mother dear, we have been with you and all in the tents."

"And I have prayed for you and talked of you all," said Ella; and she turned away to hide her tears, for she thought of Mr. Howard.

"Ella," said the stalwart Torribius, "you are as slight and fine as the hare-bell: go, my child, to your tent to sleep."

"I will," said Ella, and she retired unseen by any to her bed, and there sobbed herself to sleep for heaviness of heart with the memory of their beloved old man.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LADY AT THE WELL—THE LOST NOTE—
THE CAROL BASKETS—MR. STEPHENS.

“WHAT are these Elley?” said Ruth, the morning after their return.

“Baskets made of holly, and its berries, mother.”

“They are pretty, I declare, with their bright berries,” said her mother.

“They are Rachel’s making and fancy,” said Ella; “and she calls them Yule baskets.”

“First I thought,” said Rachel, “of calling them Christmas baskets, then Yule—but I shall call them neither one nor the other, but Carol baskets.”

"Why such a name as that?" asked her father.

"Another time," said Rachel, slightly colouring, "and I will tell you, but not now. I have made ten, and mean to begin selling them to-morrow. Christmas is nigh at hand."

"How much shall you ask for them?" asked Jock.

"Twopence," said Rachel; "I can make ten in a day with little trouble, so I should not ask more."

"*Should* not!" said Edith; "ask what you like, and get what you can. I would ask sixpence."

"Too much," said Rachel, "it would be dishonest."

"If others are fools enough to give sixpence," said Ruth, "I should not care to be dishonest."

Rachel answered not, but she thought, "God would not be pleased with me if I were covetous, so I will not ask more than they are worth."

On unpacking their things, they found

they had left Mr. Howard's note behind. Ethric recollected that he had put it into a cleft of the rock, intending to take it out the last thing, but had forgotten it.

"Should Mr. Howard or the young ladies go into the cave, and find it," said Ella, bursting into tears, "how ungrateful they will think us!"

Ethric, Browne, and Gabriel, sat down in despair. Rachel, whose dancing spirits always looked round for a remedy, jumped up, and said, "Sit not dooling here; for when did ever dooling bring back what is lost? I myself will go, and tell the truth to Mr. Stephens, and he'll not be angry with the truth; for he serves the God of truth, and so my telling the truth will make him forget our thoughtlessness."

"Why, we might have thought of that, to be sure," said Ella, wiping her eyes; "but the sun will not come into my heart as it does into yours."

"Tears," said Ethric, "only bubble there."

"It is very stupid of me," said Ella.

"You are not well, Ella, and your cheek is very pink. When the spring comes you will be better, and when the summer comes you will be quite, quite well."

"Shall I, Rachel?" said Ella.

The next morning, Rachel dressed herself in her green petticoat and scarlet body, and she put on her gipsy bonnet, and hanging her penny glass to a twig, she combed her hair beneath the bonnet. When she had finished her toilet, she took her knitting of many and bright colours, and throwing her carol baskets behind her shoulder, she set off with a spring, as if wings were on each foot, in pursuit of Mr. Stephens. Rachel might now be called a child of prayer and play. The scarlet berry in the sunshine—the smell of newly turned-up earth—the bird starting from the thorn in the hedge—all and everything, this morning, sent her heart in joy to the God, whom she had so lately found. Then she would relieve her heart of its intense joy and hope, by pouring forth wild gipsy songs. This she sang in a rich wild strain :

"Farewell—farewell—I leave you now,
My foot springs light o'er mountain brow,
O'er heathery plain—through mossy glen—
To join my wandering tribe again.

"How freshly now this lightsome air
Wantons in my streaming hair,
My naked foot the streamlet laves;
I love, I do, its dancing waves.

"I come, my people, wild and free,
To your desert homes right joyously,
The voice of your hills has been with me long,
The care-worn dwellings of men among."

"The sound of your streams has filled mine ear,
When nothing I cared for or loved was near,
It has solaced—supported—through care and pain,
Till I burst my bonds to join you again."

She had gone some way, singing and knitting, and darting forward, and looking at every pretty object in her way, when she saw one coming towards her. "Who is this?" said the gipsy girl; "he is no sportsman, for he has no gun in his hand. Nothing but the minister, or farmer, or sportsman, leave their beds, or their houses, while every drop of dew is in its place, and the sun has

scarcely sent forth its first light ; sportsman he is not, for he has neither gun nor dog ; farmer he is not, for in this part of the country they do not dress so trim ; a do-nothing gentleman he is not, for they do not leave their roofs till the sun has long and long lighted up the sky. Who can he be, then, but the minister going about among his people telling of God ? He is all dressed in black, too—that is a sure sign that he is the minister.” The gentleman, whoever he was, now came up to her ; he could not pass anything so fair and young.

“ What have you here, my child ? ” he said.

“ Carol baskets to sell,” she said.

“ Why do you call them carol baskets ? ”

“ May be, and I cannot like to tell you,” said Rachel.

“ I should like to buy one if I knew why they were called carol baskets ; yet I hardly like without knowing why.”

“ No harm in the world, sir,” said the gipsy ; “ and if you do not like to buy one, why, let me give you one ; maybe you are afraid of the fairies.”

"No, no; I am not afraid of the fairies," said the stranger, laughing very heartily; "and I will buy one. How much are they—sixpence?"

"Sixpence! O no! they are not worth sixpence, only twopence. I can make ten in a day."

"Here is sixpence, however," said the gentleman; "twopence for the basket, and fourpence for your honesty."

"Honesty is what God desires of us, should we be paid for what God commands," thought Rachel. "Thank you," she said aloud, "a thousand times: here is a bright-berried one."

"They are exceedingly pretty."

"And I do think they are," said Rachel, holding them up in the sun. "I am pleased, certainly, with them, for I invented them myself—the pretty things!" she said, swinging one round and round on a stick.

"You seem pleased with your own work," he said, smiling.

"Why, now, is it any use to go and abuse a bright thought that has come over you

by chance? if you do, I think the next thought may be dingy enough. Have you children?"

"One little girl."

"Give her this," said the gipsy, "it is a little one glittering in scarlet; and tell her it is from Rachel Stanley, the gipsy."

"I know your name," said the gentleman.

"You do!" said Rachel, starting.

"I do.

"Then you really know what we pretend to know."

"What do you pretend to know?"

"Don't you know really, sir, what the gipsy pretends to know?"

"You pretend to tell fortunes."

"Yes," said Rachel, "and to tell past and coming events."

"Do you acknowledge that it is all fraud?"

"Yes, sir; God is above, so is Jesus Christ our Lord, and I dare not, if I would, say it is not all pretence and lies, for it is."

"If you know God and our Saviour, you

would not only fear to be deceitful, but for his love you would not, I trust, wish to be so. She who loves the pure and just God, little girl, must try with all her heart, and mind, and soul, to be pure and holy."

"I know it, sir, I know it; and I do try, and I am somewhat better than I was, entirely from the great love and fear I have of the kind God. Yet tell me, how you do happen to know me?"

"One has written to me of *his little friends*."

"Mr. Howard has spoke of us," said Rachel, her eyes sparkling with joy; "and did he call us *his little friends*? the dear, the kind old man! Then you are Mr. Stephens, one of his kin. Happiness to you, joy and merriment of heart to you, and all belonging to you!"

"Thank you, my little girl," said Mr. Stephens, much entertained with her originality.

"I was on the look-out for you, when I met you," said Rachel, "to tell you that we had left the note behind that we had

in care for you. Will it signify much, sir?"

"No, my child, I will write to him, and tell him."

"And say, sir, how we lamented: yet not I either, but they did; for sorrow would not cling to my heart, for I thought much mischief was not done; and I knew Mr. Howard, with all his kindness, and his thoughts of high things, would not be greatly angry with us for a few winks and sleepy nods of the memory, which is but a little fault, after all, for it has nothing in it against God."

"Can you read, my child?"

"Something of a read I make of it," said Rachel; "but as for Ella and Gabriel, their eyes run away with the words as if they were counting stones in the streams. They are more given to sit still, and think, and ponder, than I am; I like to be up and about, and to steal thoughts and fancies of the pretty things I meet in my way."

"Have you a school amongst you?"

"What! a school in our tents, with a

man with a stick in his hand, looking out for a fault, that he may give you a blow?"

"It is not so," said Mr. Stephens, laughing, "the rod is hardly ever used."

"Maybe not," said Rachel; "yet still there the stick is ready for you, if you have a happy thought or laugh that you cannot help giving way to: we gipsies can never do right, if we have not the power of doing wrong."

"You are a wild set, I know," said Mr. Stephens.

"Open air and liberty make us so," I suppose; "we go hither and thither, and call all our own."

"If, then, you have the power of doing wrong, you generally choose the right, do you?"

"We have laws among us," said Rachel, "that we may not break, and we seldom do. Little faults, that I hear are common among roof children, shabby faults, are rarely heard of with us; for we are so thrown upon our conscience, that the heart-voice becomes strong, and speaks loudly generous wishes

in our ear. If any one with power were to come and say, 'I trust in you, Rachel, that you will do all you can to please me,' would I? O yes, yes, and rather lose my liberty for a week, than do wrong; but if he were to come, or rather if I were to go to him, and he were to have a stick near him, and an eye that said, 'I see you—you shall have it if you do anything wrong,' would I? yes, yes, everything to torment the task-master, and so would every gipsy. We cannot help it, but we must be free to be good."

"How is it, then, that the gipsy steals from all who live near his tent?"

"Nay, nay," said Rachel, "it is not so; do we ever steal from you, or any round about here?"

"No, we have never missed anything."

"We poach, I will not deny that," said Rachel, "and our kettle has many a hare and a rabbit in it; and we pilfer from farm-houses at a distance."

"Take care, gipsy," said Mr. Stephens, "you are putting yourself in my power."

"I am taking myself out of your power,"

said Rachel, "by speaking to you and telling you all; I have called you into the inner tent of my heart, you are, therefore, the last person in the world who has any power over me."

"You think I could not betray you?"

"To be sure you could not; a servant of God, to please His master, must be great-hearted." Mr. Stephens smiled. "Besides," said Rachel, "if you were to turn against me, and make a scourge of my words, you would do me no harm—not my body, for I could away to other tents than my own in an hour."

"You have nothing to fear, little gipsy."

"My heart would sorrow for your sin, if I had; and I would pray for you when I had got all the anger out of me. The gipsy thinks a false friend worse than a murderer."

"You shall not find me a false friend, but a true friend."

"I believe it," said Rachel.

"Let me advise you, however, my child, not to make a friend of every passer-by."

"Do you think I would? that were too unthoughtful even for the careless, light-hearted gipsy."

"Yet how short a time I have known you, and you have told me much."

"I opened my heart to you because you were the servant of the kind God who loves us and keeps us. Are you not his servant?"

"I am; and I trust I serve my Master."

"You must, I should think," said Rachel, "or you would leave His service; it would be too dreadful a thing to wear His livery, and cheat him of His service."

"Does every faithless servant leave his master?"

"Other masters cannot see every thought even before it has left the heart, but God can; nothing can be hid from Him. It must be a fear-nought heart that will venture to deceive such a master, and, I am sure, a little-loving heart that could hurt such a kind master."

Mr. Stephens looked at her with delight,

and he offered up a prayer in secret, that she might be kept from temptation.

"Knowing and loving God, my child," he said, "you would do nothing willingly to offend him."

"No," said the gipsy girl, "neither Gabriel, Ella, nor Rachel would now poach, lie, steal, or swear; for they love and fear God, and will keep up their love and fear with prayer."

"Pray constantly, my child, for God is a God of prayer; and He will keep your heart warm in love to Him, if you will ask of Him."

"I do pray very much," said Rachel, "it is impossible to help it, for everything is so beautiful, and God and Jesus Christ, I feel, are so near to us. Then how can I help prayer and peace?"

"Will you not tell me why you call them carol baskets, gipsy?"

"I think I may, but you must promise not to think me cunning, and making a show of being good."

"I can promise, for I am sure you have not the least cunning in you."

"Now, I thank you, sir, for saying that so from your heart, and I will tell you. I can sing, sir, and they say my song is as beautiful as a bird's; so for the last two Christmases the men and women of the village have come and asked me to go round with them, on Christmas-eve, to sing the tidings of our Saviour's coming. Money was given to us, and we divided it among us. I knew not who our kind Lord that we were singing about was, so I sang away to get money like the rest. Now that I do know of whom I am singing, I cannot like to go from door to door singing His praises, as if in gratitude to Him, and all this only to get money to feast and get drunk with."

"I wish all thought as you do."

"Do you think me right? I am glad you do."

"Yet I cannot think why you should make carol baskets, because you do not sing."

"Sir," said Rachel, "all do not think in

the tents as we do ; my mother Ruth does not ; they paid me greatly for my voice, for my mother would not let me go without a great price, for she knows the value of my singing. I like not my mother to be angry with me through my Saviour, for that I cannot but think would do her little good, so, without telling her why, I have made these baskets, and mean to sell them, and bring her the money, which will make up for the carol money."

Mr. Stephens was much pleased, and, shaking hands with her, he dropped a shilling into the basket she held in her hand.

"A good beginning," said Rachel ; "eighteen pence at the top of the morning : thank you very kindly."

"May God bless you, my little child, and keep you ;" and he shook hands with her, and passed on.

It was long ere Rachel arrived at the village, for she left the direct road, to wander up the granite hill to the Logan stone. She sat down on the stone for some time to admire the view, and the distance

lighted up by the morning sun. She was alone, and she thought of the God who had made the sun to shine in this joyous way upon her, and she looked carefully round to see if any were near, and she knelt down, and she blessed the God of nature, and asked Him to bless her and her people.

On her return, she met Ella standing by the old oak stump near the well, on the road to the right of Dungal stone.

"You have sold, Rachee, all your baskets."

"Every one, and if I had had a dozen more they would all have gone, so I must hurry to the holly trees and get more twigs; but, Ella, I met on my leaving you this morning, Mr. Stephens; he is as kind as Mr. Howard; so kind, indeed, that he persuaded me to tell him why I called the baskets carol baskets."

"Have you told him, and will you not tell me?"

"I will," said Rachel; and she told her.

While they were talking, a lady came up to them, and spoke harshly to them, and

asked them if they were not gipsies, and if they were not ashamed of belonging to such a set of idle, thieving people?

"Gipsies are not generally ashamed of their people, nor of their ways," answered Rachel, colouring with anger.

"Not of picking, stealing, and lying?"

"Or of evil speaking," added Rachel, "we are much ashamed of that."

The lady frowned upon Rachel; "Did you hear the bell tolling yesterday?" she asked.

"We did, and sorrowed to hear the sad sounds," said Ella; "whoever it was is gone from us, and we shall have his foot-steps among us again no more."

"Well may you sorrow," said the lady, "for he was a sad character, drunken, and dishonest, and everything that he should not have been."

Lady," said Rachel, indignantly, "how can you speak without dooling of his sins, since you know that God must punish such an one with misery for ever and ever? Oh! lady, weep for the poor soul, and pray for

it, and show some mercy for him who is gone from us ;” and Rachel covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

The lady looked surprised, and turned to Ella, who was sitting on the well, and whose tears were streaming in large drops down her face.

“ Did not Jesus weep over Jerusalem,” said Rachel, looking up, “ though He knew its people would put Him to a cruel death ?”

“ What is all this ?” said the lady.

“ Why, lady, let God judge him, poor man ; God, who has Jesus Christ sitting by Him, to say a kind word for the poor soul, if a kind word can be said ; but you, who are full of your own sins, have no right to do so.”

“ Full of my own sins ? no right to do so, child ? what do you mean ?”

“ I beg your pardon, I am sure, and I mean nothing that is wrong, lady ; but the Bible tells us that we are sinners, every one ; and St. Paul said that he was as great a sinner as any one of us, and you are not better than St. Paul.”

"Am I drunken? am I dishonest? am I a liar?" asked the lady.

"To think of all this against the poor soul," thought Ella, "how sad!"

"No, lady, you are no drunkard, or liar, or thief," said Rachel, "because you are not, may be, given to these faults, but as they have never been in your bosom, and you have not driven them from you by prayer, it is no merit of your own that they are not there; have you no faults?"

"Certainly I have," said the lady; "we are not one of us without faults."

"Then, lady, you cannot afford to condemn the poor man who is gone; leave him to our kind Saviour."

"Gipsy!" said the lady, angrily.

"Be not angry, lady," said Rachel; "but Mr. Howard would tell you; all this he has told us, and he told us that crimes are faults grown up; perhaps your faults are not grown up into crimes, because you have not been tempted as the poor man who is gone was; but have you kept your fault small by prayer?"

"Child, I wish not to be taught by a gipsy."

"No, I could not teach you, I am only telling you what Mr. Howard has said to us, and you will listen to his words, for he is a shepherd, you know."

"He is not my shepherd."

"Not your shepherd, lady? a clergyman is a shepherd to every one—a teacher of God's word, I thought, was a shepherd, whether he taught in yonder church or yonder chapel; he is over a flock, they are in his fold, so he is a shepherd; and, indeed, lady, Mr. Howard is a good shepherd, and pleasing to God, for the schoolmistress of his village told me, that he was one who certainly did visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and who kept himself unspotted from the world, and that she did not believe there was one sinner in the village who had not a kind prayer from him many times in the day. So let him be your shepherd, and go listen to his words."

At this moment a little face peeped over the hedge, and a little voice gently saying,

"Gipsy, gipsy," was heard; the lady knew that the eyes and voice belonged to a boy called Sam Pestle, who was playing the truant during school hours, and, O horror! was come to have a laugh with the gipsies. She was bustling away to bestow a box on the ear and a long lecture on the delinquent, when Rachel caught hold of her gown. "Lady," she said, laughing.

"Well, leave go of me, gipsy."

"Lady!"

"Well, say what you have to say, but don't touch me."

"Why, lady, tell me why are you hurrying away?"

"I must insist upon your not touching me; I like not a gipsy's touch."

"Well, now I will let you go," said Rachel, "for he is gone beyond your reach, and I only wanted to keep you from him, for you looked so angry."

The lady was angry, and she walked off determined for the future never to speak to vagrants and vagabonds, and also, if possible, to have them driven from the neighbourhood.

"I am afraid she thought me very impertinent," said Rachel, "but I could not let her go after the poor little fellow, for she looked as if she would take a stick out of the hedge to beat him, and I should not have liked to have heard his cries."

"O, she would not have beat him," said Ella.

"Well, if she would not have touched him with the stick, she would with her harsh words, which are enough to set the toughest heart on edge. O, what a disagreeable woman! I would not be doomed to live with her for anything."

"Why, Rachel, how angry you are!" said Ella, laughing.

"And are not you?"

"I can't say I am; but I do think the lady does not read the Bible with the mind Jesus Christ would wish her, or she would have more honey in her heart."

"She have any honey in her heart!" said Rachel; "why, her heart is as hard and cold as the bricks we are sitting upon."

"O Rachel! are you not judging when you might be praying for her?"

"I can't pray yet for her, I am so angry with her—poor man!"

"O, then, Rachey, dear, drive the anger away; you should not let it tent in your heart, since it shuts out prayer."

"I know it, Elly, I know it."

"I am thinking," said Ella, "that the lady will not pray for the poor man, because she does not think herself good enough."

"She not think herself good enough! if that were all, she thinks herself good enough, take my word for it."

"No, I think if she did think herself good enough to pray, she would rather send a prayer to heaven for a poor soul, than speak harshly and unkindly of it when on its way to heaven."

"You think, Elly, she is good enough to condemn, but not good enough to pray?"

"Why, all are good enough to condemn," said Ella, "for all can see faults in others; we can, Rachey, in the lady. And I do think, Rachel, God would not turn from any sinner, however big his faults, while praying for another. I think Jesus would

look upon him at his prayers, and say, 'Turn, sinner, to your God, and love Him yourself.' "

" I can't pray yet for that harsh east wind of a woman," said Rachel, " for I am so angry with her."

" Harsh east wind of a woman, Rachee! that is not swearing, but they are bitter words, and bitter words are evil words; scrape, Rachee, every bit of anger from your heart against her."

" I will try," said Rachel, " but it is not so easy to me to do it as it is to you. Do you remember our saying that Mr. Howard's heart was like a bright flower garden belonging to a delicate lady, full of sweet-smelling, bright flowers?"

" Yes," said Ella, " I remember it very well."

" Elly, for all I know, that lady's heart may be full of pretty flowers of love towards all, but there is a cold east wind blowing before it which keeps all her heart-flowers back from opening, and will only let the nettle spring to sting. She is un-

commonly disagreeable, and does one no good."

"No, indeed, she has done you no good, Rachey, you may, indeed, say that; but she has done you much harm, by putting the sloe into your heart. Rachey, you said you would forget her."

"So I will, and to do so I will remember that dear friend, Mr. Howard; is he not, Elly, like the south wind that passes along the corn fields and raises into more beauty every pretty little flower?"

"He is," said Ella; "every little tiny bud of goodness he calls up into open flower in the heart, by the way of love in his speech."

"Ella, I have quite forgotten her, at least I can't say I have forgotten her for I cannot in a hurry—but I think of her without anger, and even I will think she means well, and I dare say says her prayers very often, and goes to church whenever there is church, and does what she thinks is right."

"I dare say she does," said Ella; "and she thinks it right to be harsh and to con-

denn others, thinking it will do them good."

"What will not love and gentleness do?" said Rachel; "I do think the servant of Christ should be as like his kind and merciful Master as he can. Ella, let us think no more of the lady, for anger is flying about my heart whilst I do think of her, though I try to push it away. Just see if I recollect the pretty lines that I learnt the other day from Mr. Howard's book. That dear Mr. Howard—say them, Elly, I have quite forgotten them."

"What if the little rain should say,
So small a drop as I
Can ne'er refresh the thirsty field,
I'll tarry in the sky?"

"What if the shining beam of moon
Should in its fountain stay,
Because its feeble light above
Cannot create a day?"

"Does not each rain-drop help to form
The cool, refreshing shower,
And every ray of light to warm
And beautify the flower?"

“ I have quite forgotten everything now, Elly, that made me angry ; those lines are so pretty that I could hear them over and over again ; dear, dear, how pretty they are—how is it ? ‘ What if the little rain should say —’ I can almost say it ;” so talking, they returned to their tents.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHRISTMAS GATHERING — GABRIEL, RACHEL,
ELLA, AND BROWNE, DETERMINE TO FIND
A HIDING-PLACE FOR CHRISTMAS — THE
WREN'S CLIFF, &c.

IT wanted but a few days to Christmas, and gipsies, fiddlers, tinkers, and wanderers of all descriptions, poured into the Stanley tents. Gabriel and Ella were very much disconcerted at this; they knew not what to do, there would be so much riotous mirth and drinking, so that it would be impossible to think of the day. The social, loving-hearted Rachel was so rejoiced to see all her friends, and to make new friends, that for a day or two she thought not of

the evils of such a crew ; yet on the evening of the third day, as they were reading the story of the angel of the Lord coming to the shepherds, in St. Luke, she stopped her ears to keep out the noise, and begged them to move still farther from the tents. They went up towards Dean wood, and sat themselves down on a heap of stones by the wayside, and Browne read again : “ And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them : and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you : ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in

the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger."

"The angel of the Lord came *upon* them," repeated Rachel; "if he were to come *upon* us, how should we be found?"

"And they came with haste," said Ella; "I seem to see them hurrying to the manger, with their sticks in their hands, forgetting their flocks, and speaking not, or looking at one another, in their great haste to press on to the child Jesus."

Gabriel, Rachel, and Ella, silently covered their face with their hands, and prayed a prayer in their hearts that all who were gathered together in the tents might hasten, as the shepherds, to see their Lord. When their prayers were finished, they again talked, but they told not they

had been praying, though each knew that the other had.

Christmas was on the following Saturday, and on Tuesday Ranting Sam the fiddler, from Marlborough Forest, made his appearance; his very fiddle, without Sam's fingers to touch the strings, made Rachel caper like a morrice-dancer, but she told him her feet should not jig to his tunes a bit, if every time he opened his mouth a string of oaths came out.

"Why, Rachel, and what is come over you; you were not used to be so nice with your thoughts and ways?"

"Sam," said Rachel, "a fear has come over me—a fear of doing evil; so, Sammy, give over your oaths, for I love your fiddle as much as I hate your reckless words. I could dance all day to the tunes of your hands, and weep, Sam, for the tones of your voice."

"I will tune my ways," said Sam, "as I tune my fiddle, if you will love me, Rachel."

"I do love thee," said Rachel, "and have for many a long year."

"Many a long year! why, child, thy years have been but few."

"They are few to my age, but many to my love," said Rachel, "for I loved thee for thy music and thy joy since my first year of memory."

"And your first year of memory," said Sam, "is as long as you can remember; so you think it is long since you loved me, do you not?"

"And indeed I do," said Rachel; "and now I will tell you what I will do for you if you will cease swearing while you are with us."

"Something very great, Rachey, child, it must be, if it pay me for not swearing, which is as necessary to me as smoking and drinking; I think I can forego the one as soon as t'other."

"I am downhearted to hear you say so," said Rachel.

"I'll fiddle your heart into joy again."

"Your gladdest notes can hardly raise my spirits," said Rachel, as she drew Sam to a seat and spoke to him of all Mr. How-

ard had told her; and Sam called her his little queen of goodness, and hoped he might be as good one of these days.

It is seldom that a man will not listen to a child, when it speaks of God, however depraved he may be, for religion in a child is lovely, and is felt to be so by the most wicked.

"Well, now, Rachey," he said, "I will, for your sake, try not to swear: but what, pray, was it that you would do for me if I would leave off oathing?"

"Why, Tony has taught me a dance, a jig from Norway, where they are always moving the feet to keep themselves warm, and I will teach it to you."

"Up, lassie, up, and show me, and I'll not swear one oath while I am with you."

Rachel hummed the Norwegian air, and danced the jig, and Sam declared there was not such a lassie on this side Tweed, nor on t'other either.

Late on Thursday night, Rachel, Ella, Browne, and Gabriel, returned from Mr. Stephens; they talked together, and sug-

gested plan after plan to escape from the tents during Christmas.

"Let us go and look for some hole to creep into till after Christmas," said Rachel, "to-morrow morning, when Jock and wild Sam are gone to play at quoits under High Tor, we shall not be missed so soon by the others; but Jock keeps his eye upon me, and Sam catches me every other minute to dance the jig. I wish I had never taught it him, for he swears as much as ever; and when I tell him of it, he says it is only his voice that swears, not his heart, and that no one is accountable for his voice, which goes by habit."

"I dare say he does not hear himself oathing," said Ella, "he is so used to it."

"I'll answer for it he does not," said Gabriel; "we all of us know how difficult it is to get rid of bad words."

"It will be some little adventure," said Rachel, "and I love an adventure from my heart's heart; may be we shall find a hole kept by some great monster with three or four heads, and legs without number."

"We cannot do better than go in search of this hole," said Ella; "for stay in the tents we may not, with all the noise about us."

"Browne," said Gabriel, "after what Mr. Stephens has said, I am determined that you shall not stay with us; a roof-man should not dwell with a gipsy."

"Browne going to leave us!" cried Rachel; "what can we do without the shepherd boy?"

"Mr. Stephens," said Gabriel, "will take Browne to guard and tend his cows on the moor, and to bring them home to shelter at gloaming."

"We shall weep for you," said Rachel, "as for our own kin, not one is dearer to us."

"I shall not leave you till after Christmas," said Browne.

"No, nor till after New Year's day: we must dance away the old year," said Rachel, "though it is rather shabby to kick away an old friend."

"I shall not leave you for a month," said

Browne; "at least I shall return each evening to the tents, after driving home the cows."

"You must not take to the roof till after we have left the country," said Ella.

"What think you of the lime-kiln near the Wren's Nest Cliff?" said Rachel.

"I wonder we thought not of it before to Christmas in," said Ella; "a capital place, I should think; it is scarcely spoken of in the tents, so no one will think of coming to look for us there."

"Let us turn off up the moor now, and go and look at it," said Rachel.

"From the moon it must be nearly nine, and it is at least two miles from here," said Ella, "so we had better put it off till to-morrow."

"Be it so," said Rachel, yawning; "for I am nigh tired, for I have so jiggled it and jagged it to Sam's fiddle to-day."

"I should like to know why it is called Wren's Cliff?" said Browne. "I suppose a tit of a wren has built near it; it is a small bird to give a name to a cliff."

"An undisturbed wren," said Gabriel, "builds in a hole at the top of a high granite stone."

"A wren! say wrens," said Rachel; "for the little wren of last summer never has the mossy tent that his forefathers have had generations back, and wren after wren will have it, for none can reach it, it is so high."

"I love the thought," said Ella, "that any little bird has found a home where man is not able to come nigh; he may look out and say, 'I am gipsy of that within ken.'"

"Before Adam and Eve disobeyed God, by taking the fruit that God told them not to touch, all animals and birds loved us, and did not fear us more than the dog does now," said Browne.

"Before the fruit was eaten," said Gabriel, "animals were never killed; they lived upon the fruit of the ground."

"I wish it were so now," said Rachel, "for I never see sheep driven to the butcher's from the green fields without feeling a curdling of the heart within me."

"What I hate to see," said Ella, "is the quiet, gentle cow, who, after she can give no milk, is driven away to the butcher, without one eye of pity turned to her from the many eyes that had only to turn to the field to see her quiet self."

"I wonder every eye, as she goes along," said Rachel, "has not a tear for her ready by."

"Were I a rich roof-woman," said Ella, "for an old servant like the cow, I would have fields for them to go to when they were past use; and I would have these fields filled with buttercups and wild flowers of every kind."

"They would not thank you for the gayest flowers," said Browne, laughing; "for they make the grass bitter, and they won't touch them."

"Then let them leave them alone; they will have them to look at."

"Or suppose," said Rachel, "you were to give them knots of flower-beds filled with roses, and other garden flowers round by the hedges."

"Ay, very true," said Ella, laughing, "that would do famously. All my little good people from underground, fairies, brownies, kelpies, would come to our flower knots. What a pretty world it would be if we had knots of beautiful flowers, roses, carnations, pansies, and all the rest of them, round the hedges; then would come out butterflies, dragonflies, and beautiful birds, to talk with my pets the fairies."

"I really think you believe there are fairies," said Browne.

"I do," said Rachel, "I try all I can to think so; but the thought will fade from me, and I cannot believe as I used in them. I know a brownie, and a good pleasant soul it is."

They all laughed, and Browne said, "If the brownie can catch a fairy, he will bring it to you."

"Now there's a good spirit," said Rachel. "Well, here we are;" and the merry Rachel sprang upon her brother Charley, and covering his eyes with her hands, said, "Well,

Charley boy, how many heads have you broken to-day?"

"Not one, Rachey; off with your little fingers, and hie away to bed, for your foot is the most wandering foot among us."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LIME-KILN—THEIR RETREAT DISCOVERED
—ZIBA—TORRIBIUS TAKES THE BIBLE TO
HIS TENT.

“RACHEL and Ella,” said Jock, “do you not mean to come amongst us at all?”

“Not at all, at all,” answered Rachel, playfully.

“Tell me where you lie hid—do, there’s good girls.”

“No, no,” said Rachel, “we are not quite so silly as that.”

“I will find out,” said Jock; and he walked on.

“We must do all we can to prevent it,” said Ella, “for they will so plague us

How beautiful the church looked with its holly and laurel branches to-day, did it not?" said Ella, with much devotion; "I feel so thankful to God for letting us know him. Rachel, does it not seem to you as if everything must have been so cold—that it must have been such a cold world to us, before we knew of a Saviour?"

Thus talking, they "went on their way rejoicing" to Mr. Stephens, where they were to spend the whole of the Christmas-day.

About eight in the evening, they returned to the kiln, and lighted a blazing fire, for it was a cold night, and the snow lay deep on the ground. They had talked of the little Jesus, who was born on that day, till their hearts, like the hearts of the disciples, burned within them. They opened the Bible, and sat down, and they read all they could find of the most beautiful, as they thought, of Jesus; and they read the miracle of the widow's son being restored to life, and they thought it heart-warming and beautiful.

"She was so left alone in the world," said Rachel, "her heart must have been broke down with the sorrow. Think of a poor lonely widow sitting in a tent, with a son, one only son, to take care of her, then this son to be suddenly taken from her, how broken-hearted she must have been, sitting all alone!"

"Yes," said Ella, "and her poor dead son, her all, carried out to be buried before her. What a joy it must have been to see his heavenly kind face in her trouble!"

"Yes," said Rachel, "and when he told the young man to arise, and he got up, O what joy! what joy! Our kind Lord was by the dying son in spirit, and saw him die."

"I dare say," said Ella, "but he let him die as he did Lazarus, that he might show to the world that he could raise us all from death. I think now, if I were to die, as our Saviour is not here, I should like to be raised on the other side of the heaven."

"Yes, Ella," said Rachel, "but then you would see none of us."

"That would be very sad," said Ella; "but I should have my Saviour Jesus Christ, and I do so wish to see him."

As they were talking, they saw, as they thought, three or four figures pass the door. Rachel sprang up to invite the strangers in to warm themselves, for it was piercing cold.

"I trust they are not old," said Rachel, on her return, "for it is sadly cold; but whoever it is, they are gone."

"I hope they have not found us out," said Ella.

"No," said Rachel, "fear not that, they are not thinking of us, for we left them at high revels; and they will not think of such children as we are."

Again they all sat down, and Ella begged Browne to read once more the story of the widow's son.

"Elly, I will read it to you," said Gabriel, opening the Bible. "'And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when

he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her: and when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.'"

"Kind, kind words," said Ella, "'Weep not.'"

"'And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still, and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise; and he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and that God hath visited his people.'"

"Give me the Bible," said Rachel. "How pleasant it is to be able to read," she said, turning over the leaves; "'And he said unto her, Weep not.'"

"Yes, those few words strike me so much," said Ella; "Jesus did not, like a great person, bid those who carried the bier, set it

down, and not look at the poor mother; but he turned like a tender brother to her, and told her not to dool. Yes, he spoke to her more kindly than the tenderest brother."

"Hear," said Rachel: "'And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.' Is it not lovely to think upon, Elly?"

"I should like to know," said Gabriel, "what his first words were. I dare say they were all spoken to his mother, and then his mother pointed to the great Being who stood by, and whose face must have glowed with the kind and wonderful act he had just done."

"Fancy the poor mother's joy at hearing the voice again, that she thought was hushed for ever."

As Rachel said this, she looked towards the door, and again she saw the figures; she sprang from the fire, saying, "You shall not escape me this time," and was clasped in the arms of Jock.

"You things, we have found you at last," he said.

"We came to teaze you," said Torribius, "but remained to listen, for what you read took our fancy."

"Look here," said Jock, pushing a fellow into the midst of them. The girls sprang back some steps, for he was dressed in a bear's skin, and looked like a huge bear.

"Are you afraid of me?" said a voice, the music of whose tones told who he was.

"It is Ziba! it is Ziba!" said Rachel, springing forward to him, "returned to his mother."

The bear clasped her in his arms, for he was rejoiced to see his cousin again. He gently pressed Ella to his bosom, for he said he feared to give a bear's hug to one so very delicate.

"Why, Elly, a lily of the valley would look robust by you."

"Yet I am very strong," said Ella, "and can walk, and laugh, and run, as well as Rachel."

"Who looks like the lark at spring of day," said Ziba.

"We have you amongst us again," said Rachel.

And the happy girls made him sit down by the fire, and they sat on each side of him. Jock and Torribius stood behind them, listening to, and laughing at, Rachel's questions of Norway.

Ziba told of many of the wild sports, and of the superstitions of Norway, and of the little eider duck, and Rachel wished she could set off that night for Norway. Ziba could have told them that he surpassed most of the Norwegians in every sport; and that when he left them, they entreated the lad to return, for the fame of his prowess, and his beautiful countenance, had spread through the country. But Ziba was great of heart, and therefore modest, for he looked not back to those whom he had left in skill; but his heart and wishes stretched forward to those who excelled him, and he eagere to equal them. Then at night (unheedful of the wolves and bears) he walked forth with his dogs to gaze on the bright northern sky, dazzling with its lights, and something greater than himself, something greater than anything the earth contained, swelled

within his bosom, and his heart burned within him, and he felt painfully small of heart in the glorious world; and to relieve his heart of its weight, he would turn his thoughts to his mother, and weep; and then he was the loving-hearted Ziba again, with every thought fixed upon the beloved tents that contained all he had ever loved. These great thoughts made him think little of himself; and when they praised him, he only felt dissatisfied, and wished he were greater, for he felt so sure there was much greater in the world than anything he *then* could imagine; and he would exclaim, when looking down upon all below him from a mountain, "Where is the good of all this heart and big thoughts within me, if (as I know in a few years it will be) I shall be as that stone, with no more sense."

Many months after he had returned to the tents, he told Rachel, in a midnight ramble, that before Mr. Stephens had spoken to him of immortality and heaven, his mind was always grating like an ungreased wheel within him.

"I felt I was a machine, and a glorious machine, because I had thought and will within me, which no other machine has. Other machines are moved by contrivance of mankind, but I—I felt I moved by my own will; and this thought it was that sat so uneasily within me, for I knew I must die; and this machine, with all its *will*, become as a stone on which the insect might crawl senseless—unfeeling and forgotten; and I have often cried out when I have looked upon the sun, 'Why was I made with heart and thought, only to die?'"

"Ah, you knew not of mind and soul, then," said Rachel.

"No, gipsy," said Ziba, "but I thank God I do now."

"How old were you, when these deep thoughts came upon you?"

"Before I left you they floated colourless round my heart, but it was in Norway in the midst of a violent storm, such a storm as is not known in this country, that the thoughts of death and nothingness fastened upon me. Nature looked great and

commanding—my soul felt great within me, and my unquiet thoughts scorched me.”

“ You must have been seventeen at the time,” said Rachel ; “ I wonder if we should have had such mountain thoughts if we had been as old as you before we knew of another life ? ”

“ Rachel, I am glad you never knew the heart-stings that I have. When they told me that I was beautiful, I would sigh to myself, and say, I wish I were the oak with all its grand limbs that lasts so many ages, sending forth its branches with its clusters of acorns. When they told me I was fleetier than any of my tribe, I thought of the mountain deer that was fleetier than I. When they told me I had the eye of an eagle, I knew that the eagle’s ken was far more perfect than mine. When they told me I was brave and generous as the lion, I said to myself, the lion is as generous and brave. When they told me I was bright of understanding and ready of thought, I turned to the bee, and the ant, and I observed their works, and I asked myself,

Am I greater in sense than they? Then my heart felt uneasy within me, and I thought the deer, the lion, the eagle, the bee and ant, will, like me, live for a time, and then die, and be as last autumn's leaf. Yet I felt I had that within me that they had not; and this is what beat so strong against the bars of my heart."

"It was the soul struggling in you, Ziba?"

"It was, Rachel; and now, Rachel, that I understand this for-ever soul, this part within me that never dies, I feel glad when they tell me that I am generous, and brave, and that my mother should be proud when she looks at her Ziba; for I am determined that this form, that God has raised up from the dust, shall be his temple, and that this mind shall be lighted up with *His Spirit*; for His Spirit loves to dwell with those who pray, and I will pray; O Rachel, how I'll pray!"

"Be, dear Ziba, like the beautiful place of worship at Salisbury,* that looks like a bird outspreading its wings."

* Salisbury Cathedral.

"Yes, dear Rachel," said Ziba, striking his bosom, "God has made me so very beautiful, as they say He has."

"This lovely building," said Rachel, taking his hand, "shall be his temple."

"It shall, it shall," said Ziba; "it shall not be a whited sepulchre."

Rachel was much affected, and they both knelt, and looking up to the star where she thought Ella was, she offered up a prayer. But I am anticipating. We will return to the lime kiln.

"And here is something in the Bible about them, Torry," said Ella; "you are fond of horses."

"Not hanged yet for horse-stealing, Torry," said Ziba, laughing.

"O don't speak of hanging and stealing on Christmas night," said Ella, shuddering.

"No, don't, pray," said Rachel; "go to the tents to do that."

"A thousand pardons," said Ziba, "I was thoughtless."

"Can you read to me anything from the Bible, of the horse, Ella?" asked Torribius.

"Read for yourself, Torry, for you can read."

Torribius took the Bible, and turning his back to the fire, read these words—"Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men."

Torribius was so struck with this description of his favourite animal, that he did not return the Bible, but found other passages. He read from the 38th chapter of Job these words, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy!" "By Jove," said the young man, "here is a description of the sea; 'or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and

said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.' ”

“ Proud waves,” repeated Ziba, folding his arms; “ they do look proud, rushing against the rocks, and then retreating.”

Torribius, like many of Spain, had a fervid imagination, and the majesty of the Bible delighted him; he begged he might be allowed to keep the book for one night at least.

“ Only one night, then,” said Rachel, “ for how shall we spare it ?”

“ I never knew you grudge anything that was yours before,” said Jock, taking the Bible from Torribius. “ I wish I could read.”

“ Let Torribius have it till to-morrow,” said Ella.

“ What am I to do after to-morrow,” asked Torribius, “ for I never was more taken with a book; there is beauty and grandeur in every page, and it speaks with such authority.”

“ Mr. Stephens has many to sell,” said

Gabriel; "shall I buy one of him for you?"

"Do," said Torribius; "go, now this instant."

"This instant!" said Rachel, "why, what time do you think it is?"

"About eleven," answered Torribius.

"They are every one in bed," said Ella.

"Jock, fancy every one in bed with such a moon and such stars above you!" said Torribius.

Ziba looked up, and thought of the bright northern sky.

"They are roof-people," said Rachel, "and their ways are unlike our's."

"They are feather-bed snoozlers," said Jock.

"Mr. Stephens is not in bed," said Gabriel; "he goes, when he has done all he can for the poor, to his telescope."

"Telescope! what is that? a dog?" asked Ziba.

"No, no," said Rachel, laughing; "it is a long looking-pipe, with glasses at the end, that make you see farther than the eagle."

"What does he do with it?" asked Ziba.

"He brings," said Rachel, "all the stars that we cannot see round about him."

"He does!" said Ziba.

"Indeed he does, and he knows the heavens, and is as 'hail fellow well met' with the bright sky bodies as we are with the trees and hills. Why, Ziba, think of this; he can see hills and mountains in the moon."

"Whee!" whistled Jock; "he must be a strange kind of being; do his eyes poke out much with looking after the bright nails in the heavens?"

"I wonder," said Ziba, "if he would teach me some of his knowledge. What would I give to be learned in the stars, that are always looking down upon me?"

"He is very kind," said Rachel; "ask him."

"I cannot have the face to do that," said Ziba, "for I never looked upon him in my life."

"Go with us to-morrow to see him," said Gabriel.

"I will. I long to see his long star-pipe, and I'll take a present for him."

"What present may you have for him?" asked Rachel.

"An eider-down quilt that is as warm as ten blankets, and as light as thistle-down."

"Give it not to him," said Ella, "but give it to our good old Mr. Howard."

"I'll give it to you and Rachel, to do with as you like. But I must find something for my friend of the stars," said Ziba.

"You take it for granted, then, that he'll give you sky knowledge," said Torribius.

"Yes, I think he'll not refuse me, for one is never happy till one has told others what one knows oneself. I'll give him my bearskin cloak, he'll never feel cold in it. Girls, I have brought something for you."

"What is it?" said Rachel.

"A cloak of many colours, which they wear in Norway, secured at the top with a pinewood pin."

"I wish, dear, kind Ziba, you had brought it with you to-night; how I long to see it!"

"Come," said Torribius, "we really must

return. Well, I take this book, you know, till to-morrow; and off, Rachey, with the first sprinkling of light and get me one."

"Where shall I find you?"

"In your tent," said Torribius; it is the farthest from the chief's tent, where there is the most noise. Come along, Jock; good night, children; don't forget the book. Good night, Ziba."

"There is a kiss for your safe return—give it to your mother; and there is another for the cloaks and the pinewood pins, which you are to keep for yourselves."

Ziba embraced both his cousins, and left them.

The next morning Rachel stood before her tent door with the Bible in her hand. Torribius lay near the entrance; a candle burnt into the socket told her how late he had been reading; Jock lay fast asleep close to him, and the Bible was not far from them; she gently took up her's, and laid the new one down in its place, and ran away laughing.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHAT IS THE PRETTIEST THING IN NATURE?

THEY GO IN SEARCH OF BROWNE, AND HELP
HIM TO MILK THE COWS.

HAS not every one observed, that in February there are three or four days so soft, that if we were to shut our eyes we might fancy the ground covered with flowers, and the trees with leaves. Rachel called these days flower spirit days, because, as she said, the spirits of the last summer's flowers came to bend over the spots where they had been so happy, and to breathe out their soft flower breaths, and to look upon the primroses, and violets, and mosses, and

wild strawberries, that are springing into leaf. On such a day in February, a group of about fourteen gipsy boys and girls sat on a high hill; the day was light and gay, and their young hearts danced forth in this day of spring.

"O, I am so happy," said Ella to Rachel, "and I feel so grateful to God for making this beautiful day, and letting our hearts feel it;" as she said this, she shut her eyes, and smiled, and held up her head to receive the soft air among her locks, which were blown aside by the breeze.

"What is the prettiest thing in nature, Norma?" asked Rachel.

"Gossamer in the frost," answered the gipsy.

"To talk of frost this soft day!" answered Rachel. "What is the prettiest thing in nature, Edana?"

"A bed of yellow crocuses in the sun," answered Edana.

"Very, very pretty," said Rachel; "what is the prettiest thing in nature, Ella?"

"A snow-drop peeping up from under

the snow," said Ella; "it is so pretty, from the hope it gives us, as if it were a humble messenger from the flower country, come to say they are coming to dress the earth again."

"I declare," said Norma, pettishly, "if Ella may talk of snow, I may of frost."

"Norma, tell me again," said Rachel, smiling, "what is the prettiest thing in nature?"

"A primrose bud hid in its crinckly leaves under a hedge," said the girl, recovering her temper.

"There," said Rachel, taking Norma's hand, and putting it into Ella's, "is a pretty clasp of thought; the snowdrop, and the primrose bud."

"I don't know," said Ada, "if I do not like a large bed of yellow crocuses—only yellow crocuses in the sun—better than anything."

"And I do delight," said Rachel, "in a large bed of yellow crocuses. I remember standing more than an hour looking over a garden paling, upon a bed of crocuses,

and I remained there till I heard a laugh; it was at the gipsy, with her eyes fixed upon the yellow things."

"Who laughed?" asked Norma.

"Some children in the garden, and they offered to gather me some, but I would not let them for all the world, only I begged I might come again."

"I remember," said Ella, "your once passing a shop and going into it, and buying a skein of amber and scarlet braid, and hanging it up on the outside of the tent to look at, as you were knitting."

"To be sure, and so do I remember it, and the merry walk we had, and Ziba winding the braid round his locks, and the proud look, and the words of his mother, when she saw him."

"I think," said Reuben, "a clump of trees, with bright yellow fringe in autumn, is a cheerful sight."

"So it is," said Rachel, "with a moon beyond—the dreariness of the moon showing off the pleasant look of the clump."

"What is prettier," said Kelita, "than

the foxglove? look into the bell of the foxglove!"

"Ah, the fairy cap, as they call it in Ireland," said Rachel.

"A cap," said Ella, "for tiny good spirits."

"This pleasant, pleasant day,
We will up and away,"

said Rachel, jumping up; "will you come, Ella, with me, and see Browne; by the time we arrive, he will be calling the cows. I have promised to help him to milk, that he may get earlier to the tents; we are to have a dance to-night, and Ranting Sam says he will hang himself and me too if he utters one oath to-night, or drinks one glass too much."

Ella rose to go with Rachel, and the rest made their way to the tents to prepare for the merry-making.

"Now don't you go and ransack my box, Kelita, and take my scarlet petticoat, as you did at the last merry-making," cried Rachel, laughing.

"No, indeed, I won't, Rachel; but why do you care about the colour of your petticoat?"

"Sooner asked than answered, Kely."

"You can if you will," cried Kelita.

"I'll no deny that," said Rachel; "there are few things we cannot do if we will."

"Then I'll answer for you—Ziba wishes for the scarlet petticoat, and *I'll* wear it for *you*."

"No, I know you'll not," said Rachel, laughing, and skipping down the hill, followed by Ella; they continued on their way, climbing over hedges and ditches, threading round granite rocks, and jumping over streams, till they arrived at the vicarage. "This house is very pretty," said Rachel; "and the sight of the country and hills from it beautiful, but I do not like it so well as Mr. Howard's."

"No, I have a love for that spot," said Ella, "that I never had for any other. I think what made us love it was the grey head of him who had met us in the storm."

They looked now about them for Browne,

and saw him at some distance, close to a barn, tying up fagots ; he saw them nearly at the same moment that they perceived him, and taking up a stick that lay near, he hastened towards them, whistling.

" You are come just in time, Rachey and Elly, for I am on my way to bring the cows together, and such plagues as they are, they never seem to know milking-time, as other cows do. You have milked cows, gipsy Rachel, by moonlight, I know," said Browne.

" Indeed I have," said Rachel, " when the lady moon rose late, milked many and many a cow. I remember going one fine morning, at about three, it was in the deep of winter, so there was no sun coming, or likely to come, for some hours, and the moon and the stars had placed themselves quite to their liking in the heavens ; Jock and I went together into a field where were many cows ; Jock with a large club, and I with a pail and creepy."

" Where did this happen—here ?"

" Luck to the first cuckoo, no ; it was

when we were in the north, near Carlisle, lying under a hedge, not far from a large farm—you don't see such farms here."

"I hope you were found out!" said Browne.

"Brownie, I'll milk your cows," said Rachel, "for that unfriendly wish; sure enough, though, I was. I chose my cow, and putting down my creepy, I sat down, placed my pail before me, and began milking with a skilful hand and a merry heart."

"I'll answer for you having a merry heart," said Browne; "what a good-for-nothing hussey you were in those days!"

"Not at all," said Ella; "she did not then know that it was wrong to do what every other gipsy did."

"That's right, Elly, stand up for me."

"You must have known," said Browne, laughing, "that the roof-people, as you call them, thought it wrong."

"What did I care for the opinion of the roof-people?" said Rachel, with a toss of the head. "I don't care now much for what they think."

"Yes, you do," said Ella, "I am sure you do, Rachee."

"Well, Ella," said Rachel, "perhaps I may care for what a few of them say, but I should like to find the cows of the ill-natured woman of the well, I would milk them."

"No, I know you would not," said Ella, laughing, "so don't say you would."

"Well, well, then I suppose I wouldn't."

"Go on with your story, Rachel," said Browne.

"Jock lay hid with his club behind some pieces of wood, and I began my work busily, singing to keep the cold out, when I felt myself roughly seized by the shoulder; I nearly screamed."

"I dare say you did," said Browne, "you were finely caught; what did you do?"

"I did sly enough, I sorrow to say; said I, 'And is it you, Samuel Jones? (for I knew him directly,) and I am glad to see you.' 'You are, are you?' said Sam, 'I doubt it.' 'Now don't be doubting, but I did not expect you.' 'You are an auda-

cious gipsy body, and you and your pail shall be had before the justice to-morrow.' 'My pail, the poor thing, if it goes, I go, for it can't speak for itself, and I must be there to answer for it, for I would not desert a friend in need;' as I said this, I heard a rustling behind the wood; I feared it might be Jock coming to take my part with his club, so I spoke to him in our language, and bid him lie still, for I would manage the roof-man. Sam at this started, and asked what I was saying. 'Saying, why, saying something to something that you can't see.' 'Well, leave your something alone, and take up your pail, and come along with me.' 'Sam,' said I, 'have you seen Betty Bell lately?' 'What know you of Betty Bell?' 'Why, don't I know that you love her better than twenty sisters and sixty cousins, all thrown into a sack together?' Samuel looked at me. 'Does she love you better than Peter Turner, the sly one in the corner?' Sam looked as if he didn't like this, and began with come back again anger, 'Take up your pail, and come

with me.' Now let me go for this once, and don't bring me and my poor pail before the justice, and I will tell you whether she loves you or no, and may be I can give you some comfort.' Samuel Jones, who thought none in his secret, said, ' You gipsies find out everything through your bad charms.' Now our bad charms, as Samuel called them, was going about, and giving ear to every little village talk. ' Nay, Sam,' said I, ' you won't call it a bad charm that can tell you that she loves you.' ' Can you tell me?' said the man, changing his tone. ' I can, and I will, if you will let me off this time.' "

" Shame, shame!" said Browne, " you knew nothing about it."

" Not I," said Rachel.

" But, Browne," said Ella, laying her hand upon his arm, " when you call out shame, shame, remember that Rachel only did as other gipsies did."

" Not quite so," said the now true Rachel, " Ella, you and Gabriel never would go the lengths that I did; I may say, I went the

whole tree of deceit and lies, roots, trunk, branches, leaves, and all. How changed I am now! But what kept you right, Ella, you and Gabriel not knowing more of our Saviour than I did?"

"I don't know what did, I am sure," said Ella, "but a something told me our ways were wrong; but you know Gabriel had much more of this feeling than I had."

"Yes, Gab's thoughts were always pinching him," said Rachel; "how uncomfortable he made himself, poor soul!"

"These are the two words that clear up all—*poor soul!* His conscience guarded his soul, that part which is to rise again," said Browne.

Rachel bowed her head, and for a minute prayed in heart that she might not be led again into temptation. Browne begged her to go on with her story.

"No," said Rachel, "I will not; for as I tell it, I get too much pleased with my cunning. I will just tell you, however, that I escaped, Samuel letting me go, upon promise that I would never again milk his

cows. 'Not *your* cows,' said I, tripping off right glad with my pail, which was half full of milk; but then again I am getting pleased with my cunning, with my past wickedness."

"And we are not 'to rejoice in iniquity,'" said Ella, smiling.

"No," said Rachel, nodding her head; "whose are these cows, Browne?"

"Mine," said Browne.

"Yours! then off with your hat, and beg them pardon for so belying them, and saying they never came to you, but gave you all the trouble to go to them."

"Did I say so?" said Browne; "well, it is the first time they have ever come to seek me."

"This is the cow I'll milk," said Rachel, snatching up a milking stool, "she has the look of a deer, with her head in the air, and her eyes like fire; the others are steady, good, stupid looking creatures, looking down on the ground, as if their legs were in silk stockings."

"Take care of her," said Browne, "she is a wicked young thing."

"I don't fear her," said Rachel, sitting down, and pressing her head against the animal's side, "I'll tame her with a song;" and Rachel sang wildly, milking all the while, and the cow stood quiet enough.

When all the milking was over, and it was over this evening very soon, as Browne had Ella and Rachel to help him, they sat down to read some time before they parted; and at parting they agreed to meet at an early hour the next day, which was Saturday, to talk of Sunday. On Sunday morning they went early to the school to listen to Mr. Stephens, and none in the school were so attentive to hear as the gipsies.

CHAPTER XX.

SAD DAYS ARE IN THE TENTS.

MARCH and April had passed, and May, in all her young prettiness and many flowers, had come; yet was Rachel never heard to laugh, and scarcely seen to smile: her tears were always dropping, and if for a moment her girlish spirits broke forth, they were followed by a more bitter burst of tears. Why was this? Ella lay dying, and Rachel knew it. Ella had, from the cradle, been delicate, so much so, that the gipsies used to say, that the fairies, on a summer's night, had brought her from a lady's bower.

The measles had been in the tents, all the

children had been ill, but not one had died; yet Ella still, after two months, had a sad cough, and the gipsies' many herbs could do no good. Mr. Stephens, at last, persuaded her father and mother to let him bring a medical man. The medical man came, and heard her cough, and looked at her feeble and bent frame, and he shook his head, for he knew she would soon die: he then left the tents with Mr. Stephens, who returned to the gipsies in about half an hour, and told them that Ella was dying, that she would not suffer, but sleep away into the grave. There was mourning in the tents for the little flower, who was as a violet in the midst of her people, tender and soft. Jock, and Charley the fighter, cried like children. Ziba sat by her all day long, only leaving her to visit his mother: he shook her pillows, he raised her head, and gave her drink, he fanned her cheek, and the dying girl pressed his hand, and thought him a kind cousin. Mr. Stephens thought it his duty to tell Ella she was dying: she said it was nothing new to

her that she was going away from them all, but that she had not said so, for she knew how sad all would be. She asked him to come, if it were not too cold, in the evenings, for then many of her people would be met together, and they would hear his word; and she asked how long she had to live. Mr. Stephens said he feared not more than a few weeks.

“I do not fear to die,” said Ella; “how can I? for heaven is a happy place, and my Saviour, who died for us, and who loved little children so much, will be there; and he will pray to God for me. Yet,” she said, “I shall see a sun much brighter there than here; but I know I shall not love it as well, for it will never have shone on our tents; and the angels, they will be very beautiful, I dare say, but they will not be like you all; so I know I shall not love them as well. I will tell you what I will do; I will find three angels as much like you, Rachel, Gabriel, and Ziba, as I can, and follow them about all day, and talk to them of you.”

Day after day Ella became weaker and weaker, and her head drooped lower on the pillow; she slept much, and her dreams were pleasant, and angels seemed to visit her in them; and as Ziba and Torribius watched her smiling in her sleep, and speaking, as if to friends unseen, and who had never been in the tents, they spoke to one another, and said they felt sure there was another world after death for the spirit to go to, and they bid the dying girl pray for them.

When it was known that Ella was dying, no lying, swearing, or drinking, was in the tents; and the gipsies, with the exception of a very few, hurried home in the evenings, to be in time to hear Mr. Stephens, and many asked a blessing of him; and the elder Gabriel and Ruth hung over their darling child, and trusted they might see her again in the new country of tents, whither she was going. Two or three weeks before her death, her strength seemed to return; and Ruth and her father thought their child would not die.

One day, after she had been talking for

some time with Mr. Stephens, she said, "I have thought many and many a day of asking you all, to let me go back to the cave near the place of the storm; I wish to look upon the spot of the sea, where they all would have gone down in a moment, but for the kindness of God."

"You are so weak, dear Ella," said Gabriel.

"I feel so well, Gab, that I think I am weak no longer. I think I could even canter there on gentle Spot."

And the recollection of happy days brought the tears into the sick girl's eyes: it was too much for Rachel, she sobbed aloud. Ziba pressed her hand, and whispered to her not to give way, for the sake of Ella.

"Who knows, Rachel," said Browne, "if Ella may not recover, if she look once more on the place where we were saved?"

"*I was saved* there! and so was Rachel," said Ella; "you all from the water, Gabriel, and Rachel and I from ever again forgetting God. The wish to please God,

and to serve Him, and to pray to Him, never left us from that time."

"No," said Rachel, "when I saw them pulled in to the other boat, and then the old boat sink an instant after, I knew that God did it all, and I have tried to remember Him and to serve Him ever since."

Mr. Stephens entered the tent at this moment, and prayed by them, and comforted them. They told him of Ella's wish to go to the cave.

"There to die," added Ella, smiling, "and to look every day, before I go from you, on the place of the storm." Mr. Stephens asked her why she wished to visit the place of the storm. "Why, sir," said Ella, "I think every day some or other will come to see me, even the most rough and the most thoughtless; and as they are coming on their way I think they won't do harm. Charley, as he comes, will not fight; Jack will not poach and swear; Torribius will not sing any of his wicked songs, that he does not think wicked; then father and mother will come, and they will look on Elly dying.

Rachel, darling, you must not think I can live." Rachel only answered by tear-drops, which she snatched away with her finger. "And I shall always be talking of going to another land, a land where there is much more space than there is here; and I shall tell them a great deal of God and our Saviour; and then I shall point to the spot of the storm, where the waves rose so high in hopes of getting them, but was not let to do so by the kind God and Saviour who is now taking me away in this quiet way. I think this will make them love God, and serve Him, and pray to Him."

As they listened to Ella, all in the tent felt God was over them, and that His hand was supporting them, and that He was nigh them; they felt this in their hearts, though not in words; and Rachel's tears ceased to drop, and Mr. Stephens said to himself, "This is to enter heaven as a little child."

"I shall be so happy," said Ella, "to see again the first church we ever went into—the first house of God in which we ever knelt—and the dear grey head that was

with us when we trembled on the sea-shore to see the waves rising so high to swallow up so many we loved. Then when God said from heaven to the fierce waves, 'Peace, be still,' and all of them were happy in a safe boat then. Mr. Howard knelt with us, and offered up a prayer to God with us. O I do so want to see him again! You are not angry with me for wishing to leave you to go to him, are you, sir?" she said, turning to Mr. Stephens.

"Angry, my child!" said Mr. Stephens, "how can I be, my little girl? I love you very much."

"And my heart," said Ella, "dances to hear your steps, as it used to dance on the hills on a spring morning; but still this heart yearns to see Mr. Howard again."

"And you shall," said Mr. Stephens, "see Mr. Howard again, and you shall see the church where you first knelt to the Saviour who blesses little children; and I will arrange it all for you, and go myself with you."

"Dear, kind Mr. Stephens!" said Ella, faintly, "I feel very tired."

And with her hand clasping Mr. Stephens's hand, she fell fast asleep. Rachel stepped lightly and took her place by the pillow, and Ziba and Gabriel, when Mr. Stephens had left the tent, sat themselves down at the door of it, and watched that no one might enter.

The next day Mr. Stephens went at a very early hour to the tents; he tried to persuade Ella to give up all thoughts of returning to the cave, but in vain; she said she felt as if she could jump on Sister Spot, and be off faster than any of them.

"No, no, my child," said Mr. Stephens, "you cannot ride there; but I have a cart on springs, that is as easy as any carriage, and you shall go in that, tent and all. Will you like that?"

"Yes, yes," said the gipsy girl, "how kind you are!"

"I," said Gabriel, "will ride by your side on Sister Spot."

"Do so," said Ella, "Gab dear, do so, and don't leave me for one moment. I must look at you both the whole way."

The next day Rachel went on Sheltie to the cave to light fires, and to see that every thing was comfortable for the poor invalid. Sheltie sprang forward with his young mistress, and those who saw her pass, thought the gipsy very gay. No one knew the sorrow of that young heart. "It was," as she said afterwards, "as if Sheltie's canter had stopped the tears in her eyes to make them drown her woeful heart."

CHAPTER XXI.

ELLA RETURNS TO THE CAVE TO DIE THERE.

ELLA reached the cave without much fatigue; Ziba had brought an eider-down quilt from Norway for his mother, but his gipsy mother laughed when he gave it to her, and said, she believed she should be the first gipsy that had ever slept under such a soft, high-blown, puffy thing. When Ella became ill, he was rejoiced that his mother would not have it, for he thought it was just the thing for the sick girl. Mrs. Stephens also brought her a feather bed, and arranged all for her, and placed her upon it. The exertion of being carried into the cart made her sleep, and she scarcely

opened her eyes till she arrived at the first point from whence she could see the tower of the church ; smiling, she pointed it out to Gabriel, who rode beside her, then turning to Mr. Stephens, who had slept the night before at the parsonage to be ready to meet her, and take her to the cave, she said, " You will beg Mr. Howard, will you, to let me be buried on the rising part of the ground in the churchyard, from where we can see the distant hills."

" I will say all this to Mr. Howard," said Mr. Stephens, " but you will see him yourself, my little girl, to-morrow."

" Yes," said Ella, as if thinking aloud, " I shall like that spot, for it is free and open, and Mr. Howard passes close to it on his way in and out of his wicket gate ; and there we all stopped to meet him the first day we went to church ; yes, there I must be laid."

Ella became weaker and weaker every day, and all knew she had not long to live. Mr. Howard came to see her every day, and Mr. Stephens always once, sometimes

twice in the week: he generally contrived to fall in with the gipsies on their way to visit Ella, and they would linger for him to join him: much did he do for them; and many who had never had one serious thought before, trembled for their souls, which they now felt had been so defiled. Ranting Sam, from Marlborough, was most deeply impressed; his fiddle hung up day after day untouched, for he said the creature had uttered so many sounds to wicked words, at the bidding of his fingers, that he could not now that Mr. Stephens had talked to him so much, and Elly lay dying, bear even the sight of it.

"O!" he said, "I will teach my children to fear God, for it is an unblest thing, so loving life as we do, to die, and not live again but in misery; but marry! I can never marry, for who would marry Ranting Sam the Swearer, that had any conscience? and I'll not marry an unconscienced lassie for the gold that a thousand fiddles could bring."*

* My readers will be glad to hear that he did marry a "conscienced lassie," and that he lost the name of Ranting Sam for the good gipsy fiddler.

"Farewell, Sam," said Ella, as he was about to leave her one evening, "and don't forget taking the fiddle next time you come; the poor thing has hung up for the last six weeks without having been touched; so bring it to-morrow evening."

The next day, Sam (for he shall no more be called Ranting Sam) took down the fiddle, and brushed off the dust, and blew between the strings, and said, "Now I love you again."

Ella made him play for her all the songs that had no bad words, as she said, and the dances that she and Rachel had so often danced to, and she begged him never to let the sun rise or set without a morning and evening hymn. "You can, Sam, tune up your joy and gratitude with the birds, for your fiddle you can make do anything."

Sam promised all this, and he not only promised, but kept his word. Nothing, however, could persuade him to join the carol singers on Christmas Eve, for he said, "he never would sing his Saviour's praises for money to get drunk with."

"What a happy thing it is, Samuel," said Ella, "that we all know of another land, where, perhaps, tents are pitched under beautiful trees, in the midst of flowers and birds—for I think God will let us have birds, and trees, and flowers in paradise. We know," she went on eagerly, "that the vine will grow in heaven, for our Saviour has said that He would drink of its fruit again with his disciples in heaven. I think He said so before they sung a hymn." *

"Dear Ella," said Gabriel, "you will tire yourself if you say so much."

"Gabriel," she said, pointing to a bright, twinkling star that could be seen from the cave, "perhaps Abraham and all the patriarchs are lying in tents in that star, waiting for the day when all will go to heaven, and perhaps angels will come to us and teach us, and make us ready to go to our Saviour when the time is come for us to go—for some say we shall not go to heaven as soon as we die; you know, Rachel, I asked Mr. Stephens about it, if it were so."

"Yes, dear Ella, you did."

* Mark xiv. 25, 26.

"Yes, Rachel, and he said the wisest man that ever lived knew no more of that than the infant at the font. All we did know was, that all would be as was the best, for that God himself had arranged it all." The gipsy stopped, and sank down heavily on her pillow quite spent, and with a happy smile, fell asleep.

On Sunday morning the sun shone and the bells flung their merry peals far and wide; Ella lay before the cave, saying not a word, only looking out towards the place of the storm; she would then look towards Gabriel, and smile, and again gaze on the sea. No one spoke to her, for she looked so happy, that they feared to break such happiness. Rachel was absent, but in a few moments returned with a white lily in her hand. "My Saviour's flower," said Ella, taking it. She lay back her head and died, and the lily dropped on her cheek.

Ruth came in, and knew Ella was gone; lamentations and cries filled the tent, but Rachel and Gabriel fell upon the body, and uttered not a sound. They looked at the

face every now and then that seemed as if smiling on the departing spirit, so happy it looked ; then they again hid their faces in the clothes ; they never till that moment quite understood that a sister could die—could quite leave them for ever.

Rachel took the lily, and putting it in water let no one approach it ; she wept bitterly when Gabriel asked her why she would not even let him kiss it as the last thing that Ella had touched. She would not let him touch it, and she would not tell him why she would not. The evening after the funeral she took the lily, and calling Gabriel to her, said, with many tears, ‘ Come, Gabriel, and let us go to the grave.’

“ Come, Rachel,” said Gabriel, taking her hand, “ come, then.”

They went, and came to the grave ; it was late when they reached it, and the moon shone upon it.

“ Dear Ella,” said Gabriel, throwing himself down on the little mound, “ and are you under all this ?”

Rachel dried her tears to give comfort to

her brother; "Her body is here," she said, "but her spirit is gone to her Lord."

"We shall go to her, I know it all," said Gabriel, "I know it all; but, oh! that her spirit might come back again!"

"Why seek ye the living among the dead?" murmured Rachel. "Gabriel dear, we must not do that."

Gabriel raised himself. "Our Father, which art in heaven," he said.

"Gabriel, I have brought this lily, the lily that toils not—'our Saviour's flower,' as she used to call it—to lay on her grave, thinking her spirit, perhaps, may return from heaven, or the bright star, and rest upon it, to be with you and me."

"Put it there," said Gabriel, "at the head—there, there."

Rachel put it just as he wished—the boy gazed upon it for more than an hour, as did Rachel, sitting beside him with her hands clasped in her lap. They gazed till they fancied the leaves brightened with the returning spirit; they then knelt down in long and fervent prayer, and having wrapped

their coats round them, they laid their heads on the grave, taking care not to touch the lily, and fell asleep.

The gipsies very soon left Devonshire ; before they went they covered Ella's grave with wild flowers ; each gipsy putting in the flower they thought she had the most loved. Gabriel put in the primrose—Rachel the violet, and they begged Mr. Howard to put in with his *own hand*, the lily, the flower our Lord had particularly mentioned.

The night before they left, Mr. Howard's little chapel (he had fitted up a room in his house for domestic worship) was filled with gipsies ; here he read prayers to them, and gave them good advice ; it was a sorrowful, yet happy, adieu. He gave Bibles and Prayer-books to all ; and Mr. Stephens gave Ziba a telescope ; Ziba was of high intellect, and had studied the stars with Mr. Stephens ; in his pocket was a Milton, given him by Mr. Howard. Isabel and Clara promised to visit Ella's grave very often, and to take care of the flowers that

were on the grave, and Browne promised every Sunday evening to go there and pray for them all.

Five years had passed, and the Stanleys had never been heard of. One Sunday morning, on the 5th of December, the little village church of — was filled with gipsies. After church the whole of the tent of Gabriel, and many from each tent, stood under the yew tree to wait for Mr. Howard. Rachel, now grown a beautiful young woman, and her husband Ziba, silently waited for Mr. Howard's blessing.

That night Ziba and Rachel, Browne and Gabriel, knelt beside the grave, and planted a wooden cross, with the figure of our Lord beautifully carved by Ziba, at the head of the grave.

"She will not come to us, we shall go to her," was the thought of Gabriel as he left the grave.

THE END.

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